

Wesleyan University

**ORGANIZING ENERGIES:
COMPOSITION THROUGH SOCIAL AND ACOUSTIC SYSTEMS**

By

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**A Dissertation submitted to Faculty of Wesleyan University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Music**

Middletown, Connecticut

May 2017

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Acknowledgments

To my professors:

Ron Kuivila, for his tireless craziness, his infinite knowledge and specially for his generosity.

Jeffrey Schiff, for his deep understanding of art and for sharing it with me.

Paula Matthusen, for her energy, her precision and professional advice.

Liz Phillips, for her inspiring anti-academicism.

Alex Waterman, for his sincere advice and kindness.

To my friends:

Hallie Blejewski, for all her help, for her gallery, her dinners, her creative and inspiring presence. And for all the chocolate.

Matt Wellins, for being my professional colleague and my friend, for his knowledge, his help, his words and his time.

Tomek Arnold, for being my brother, for making my masters an adventure, for learning with me and for all the Pink.

Jordan Dykstra, for his very elegant, interesting and intelligent presence.

Warren Enström, for having an ear, a house and a word for me.

To my wife: Lucero Alonso, for daring to accompany me and for her willingness to put up with me in my always busy career.

To my colleagues and professors from México: this is also your achievement.

To my family: For making me the human I am.

To Deb and Sandy: because without them, the department would burst into flames.

Introduction

The historical importance of our acts and the social consequences they can have is a matter which I have become more aware at Wesleyan University. Each piece I can conceive is hardly detached from this awareness, there is no pure matter, everything contains references to specific contexts and background meanings, the world is a text to be read.

Though in terms of energies results for my work a very useful strategy. A system can be a behavior of elements in a given context. This given context modifies the system and at the same time this system develops an always changing links to that context, providing modifications and so on. This system can be the artwork or triggered by it. Its complexity lies in its multilayered nature. Like a living being, the world and the artwork share this complex behavior, where their elements inside can talk among themselves and acquire unexpected links. It happens at all levels.

History and sound are also systems, energy behaviors susceptible for to be seen as potentialities for art, or for reading the world. For instance, the reading of the world through the metaphor of noise as energy phenomenon consisting in a variety of dimensions sharing influences, has allowed to my work take different approaches, from social to physics and more.

This has open me the creative act to sculpt the space and think in composition even as an historical situation in which perhaps the use of sound as raw material could be a political decision.

The construction of reality is also built by the perception of time and space, that is, sound. This listening act crosses different boundaries and is embedded in our context, in our way of giving meaning to what we experience.

In the work I conceive, this holistic consciousness brings me the possibility of using parameters or conceptions from other realms in pieces that can oscillate between theatre,

choreography, sculpture, video, sociology, data, etc., creating unexpected relations to reveal another knowledge from ourselves or beyond, to construct the reality.

The present document is an artistic research of the organization of those forces, which at Wesleyan University have gone to a very high point of sophistication and have rebuild my own processes and my way to understand life.

Multiplicity embedded in any artistic activity has to have an equivalent complex system behind it. In a chaotic place like my country, the possibilities are rather overwhelming, at the point that sometimes is necessary to get out to have more perspective on their potentialities. How can clarity be pursued from a very fragmented place where either the problems or the artistic knowledges are not one but many? And how to understand an interdiscipline from a place entangled in a simultaneity of never achieved modernities as much as in several traditions where revolution never happened, in a society that adapts itself stumbling among the fast exigencies of the market economy?

As a human, my best solution to exist within the context, is to exist with all of my strength against conventions I never asked to have, or that doesn't belong to me as a free person, the most earnest way to exist is then for me, as an artist. Given the world we have, what else can we talk about?

The present thesis is also about my artistic research for possible paths in the understanding of those questions.

In the first chapter I explain how politics were embedded since the beginning of the construction of a Mexican musical identity, and how these are still present, it is a succinct historical review, not including the history of the electroacoustic music or the development of interdisciplinary ways to see music. The first of these topics has positively added more entropy

to the cultural processes in music education since 1970 when the first electronic studio was installed, it deserves a particular analysis, specially because its development wasn't taken too seriously by academy and now the electroacoustic music has played a crucial role in interdisciplinary attitudes, the other subject that had brought even more diversity in compositional paths. However, this historical points –although never extent of political dynamics– weren't needed to stablish my main point.

For the second chapter I talk about one very particular way to confront culture. And this is by making an instrument and building a micro culture around it. Here we can witness about how interdisciplinary strategies are possible in México.

The third chapter is divided in two large sections. It is about embracing several ways to produce artistic results in a context of a concert. It functions as the core of the thesis, given the fact that is the best stratagem of dealing with different forces, from social to acoustic, towards an artwork. It was a composition class for me. The entire chapter is dedicated to talk about my fall thesis recital. So that, in the first section I talk about the materials I used, about its context, providing an analysis of each of them. Whereas the second section is designed to deploy these materials in dialogue as happened in the context of the concert, how did they work and how the shape of the concert was organized.

Finally, the four chapter is for the other related work I've realized in Wesleyan, before and after the fall concert, including the last concert and my work in sculpture. These pieces are also seen under the notion of composing with social and acoustic energies and are very related to the thinking behind the fall thesis recital.

Although all of the scores are included at the end in the appendix, I provide a link for each piece, that takes you either to the video of the piece or to the online version of the score.

Chapter 1

Brief historical context of energies in México

New music in Mexico is barely documented and the official history is deeply embedded in institutional legitimations and politics of power. Two of the most influential composers in México were divided by political situations, in a historical moment where Mexican classical music was building an identity. Nevertheless, from there two main compositional school approaches can be traced broadly.

This departing point is crucial because of that decisive intention in building a Mexican style in classical music¹, and because this demarked different paths which resulted in precisely a lack of unified style in Mexican music.

The division started between Chavez and Revueltas because a political change in the government. 1930 was a rare time for the arts in México, with the painter Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo in the fame, and a young film industry working hard. Carlos Chavez and the photographer Paul Strand were planning to film a documentary when the new government of Lázaro Cárdenas took power and gave the project to Silvestre Revueltas² and this led to a break in the relationship between Revueltas and Chavez. After the period of Cárdenas, Chavez becomes the official composer of the state³.

Political changes in México have a direct impact on culture, the discontinuity of cultural project caused by those, had taken the country to a very unequal education.

¹ During the 20's the revolutionary ideals started to consolidate, the institutions were trying to work for the people and in the need of a cultural project as a background they supported a cultural nationalism. <http://www.wikimexico.com/articulo/silvestre-revueltas-legado-musical>

² *Program Notes* "Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Retrieved 14 December 2014. [https://cso.org/uploadedFiles/1 Tickets and Events/Program Notes/051310 ProgramNotes Revueltas Redes.pdf](https://cso.org/uploadedFiles/1%20Tickets%20and%20Events/Program%20Notes/051310%20ProgramNotes%20Revueltas%20Redes.pdf)

³ Estrada, Julio. "Silvestre Revueltas: Totalidad Desarmada," *Instituto Superior de Música Magazine*, No. 7, 2007, p. 3.

But the divisions were also aesthetic. Simply by comparing the titles of the works by the two composers one can infer certain difference in thought. Any of the major works by Revueltas could be entitled easily as a Symphony for instance⁴, but none of his works obey this European nomenclature, whereas Chávez falls –maybe without being aware, or perhaps because of different political intentions– in the colonizing practice of entitle a piece as *Sinfonía India* which means “Indian Symphony”. In the exercise of trying to elevate the folklore to the form of the Symphony, he establishes a hierarchy which was not there.

Revueltas also has a clear position towards academy:

In many ways, Revueltas was a self-made composer. Despite his training in conservatories in Mexico City and Chicago, he always said he never learned much there, but later “found better teachers in the Mexican people and my country”. He remained indifferent to many of the conventions of music and musical form.⁵

After their split, Revueltas left the National Symphonic Orchestra, which Chávez conducted, and after he returns from Europe, his works gets more oriented to a politicized and radical realm, from his political affiliation to Mexican Communist Party.

The power relation that the cultural management from the government exerted, had the obvious consequence of legitimize some music over other through its institutions. Those power dynamics are well documented mostly by Julio Estrada⁶ who is one of the living composers in México who also has had an oblique relation with this power structures. The point here is to establish what kind of energies were determining broadly two different composition approaches in México until now.

⁴ As his music was very risky for his time, still now, the undocumented undervaluation of his music, because he didn't write symphonies, is still latent.

⁵ *Op. Cit. Program Notes*

⁶ <https://unam.academia.edu/julioestrada/Papers>

In the case of post-revolutionary México, acknowledged by everybody is the case about Carlos Chávez, through an ambition of power that led him to impose his music without truce and to confront, from the institutional power, to his possible rivals:

- A systematic negation of Carrillo researches [one of the first composer who started microtonalism] in the theoretical and instrumental area of micro intervals, yet unknown for the Mexican music society.
- A pro-modernist critique in the XIX century Ponce [Chávez teacher] style.
- A fallacious criticism which insisted, from the top, on the supposed lack of structure and musical formation from an already dead, Revueltas.⁷

It is actually Julio Estrada the one who has taught the most unconventional and radical approaches to music composition in México, considering for instance his continuum theory, where each parameter of sound can be thought as a continuity where each element is susceptible of composition⁸. On the other hand, we have Mario Lavista who studied with Carlos Chávez and who avoids nationalistic model in the search of a cosmopolitan ideal, as he states in this interview:

It is very sad to realize that people expect exotic music from me. It is [actually] outrageous, for those listeners are denying Latin America its capacity of abstraction. For them, we are not capable of having abstract thinking... They expect from us the exotic; that is [for them] what means to be Mexican. No, I'm sorry but Mexicans have also the capacity of abstraction and the invention of a [artistic] language.⁹

The two composers have built very different schools of composition through their approaches and through their students, and the antagonism has still happened recently.

⁷ *Op. Cit.* Julio estrada, 2007, p. 5.

⁸ Julio Estrada, "Focusing on freedom and movement in music: Methods of transcription inside a continuum of rhythm and sound," *Perspectives on New Music* 40, No. 1 (2002): 73.

⁹ Ana R. Alonso-Minutti. "Forging a Cosmopolitan Ideal: Mario Lavista's Early Music," *Latin American Music review*, 35, No. 2 (2014), p. 172.

The composer Javier Álvarez¹⁰ who studied composition with Lavista, and Germán Romero, who recently finished his Ph. D. in 2010 with Julio Estrada; had a distasteful encounter –according with colleagues who were near the conflict– when Germán Romero was fired from the direction of the De Las Rosas Conservatoire –one of the most prestigious music schools in México– and his place was taken by Javier Álvarez.

At this point in the history it is noticeable that México has welcomed another educational influences from the outside. Mexican composers who studied abroad and returned to México to build different compositional schools. Ignacio Baca-Lobera, Gonzalo Macías, Juan Trigos, just for to mention some renowned names related to my education. This has led to a diversification of approaches, in simultaneity with the institutional ones. At the same time, young Mexicans are traveling outside and returning with new ideas, or staying outside and keeping contact with México in one way or another. Although the more conservative compositional though is still latent in academy and reinforced by popular commercial music, these diversifications provide the necessary amount of entropy to realize that in México, what matters in music depends a lot on what institution do you want to be related to, official or not.

¹⁰ Who does adopt the popular cultures, according to John Adams:
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Javier_%C3%81lvarez_\(composer\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Javier_%C3%81lvarez_(composer))

Chapter II

Chapareke Hidrocálido – instrument and cosmogony invention

An exercise of historical construction as re-appropriation of the history has functioned as the basis of the Guggenheim Aguascalientes project, an artwork by the Mexican artist Rolando López¹¹ that holds the collaborative project Chapareke Hidrocálido, which has had a significant link to the notion of composition as a social system.

Before serendipity. A brief description of the departing point

*Onorúame gave the Rarámuris the task of
taking care of world balances. The
Chapareke is part of these tools to keep that
harmony.*

Guadalupe Estrada Cancio
Chapareke, la llave de la casa de Dios
(2014)

Chapareke or Chapahuela in Rarámuri means: “The key of God’s house”.

Chapareke could be materially seen as a musical instrument mostly used by the indigenous of the north region of México, the Rarámuri or Tarahumara peoples. Its organological description it is still not quite stable. On the few writings about it, its definition varies from “musical arc” to “mouth arc”¹², for instance a published glossary of instruments defines it briefly as a sitar¹³.

¹¹ As my relation with this artwork-museum is close but as an external collaborator, I will limit this thesis to the Chapareke project, more information about Guggenheim Aguascalientes can be found here: <https://www.wondereur.com/artists/rolando-lopez/artworks/museum-guggenheim-in-aguascalientes-general-plane>

¹² Civalero, Edgardo, *Arcos musicales de América del Sur*, 2014. at:

https://www.academia.edu/10414073/Arcos_musicales_de_América_del_Sur

¹³ Rozemblum, Jorge. *Glosario de instrumentos musicales*. Ed Akal, Spain, 2011, p. 127.

The Chapareke is a hollow rod or a stick, made out from *quióte* wood, the stem of the flower's maguey (*Agave fourcroydes*). Three metal strings are usually attached from one extreme to another extreme with small sticks as tuning pegs.

Its origins and age are equally obscure. Although a variety of musical arcs can be found mostly from the north of México through Latin America, it is played in a manner related to a Jew's Arp or African *Ngongo*.

Traditional sound production technique could be divided in two simultaneous actions. The first consists of plucking the strings with the right hand index finger while the left holds it in a horizontal position at the level of the face, pointing to left side of the interpreter. The second action occurs inside the mouth. It acts as a resonance cavity, filtering the harmonic spectrum while moving the tongue and the oral muscles for changing the size of the inner acoustic space.

Besides the specific technique, its stability resides too on the fact that Chapareke has its own rich cosmology. It is inserted in an ancestral system of metaphysical beliefs and culture practices, which determine it both as a divine gift and as a power tool to keep the balance of the universe.

It is also inscribed in a particular crisis environment, not only because of the systematic marginalization of the indigenous people in México but also because of the almost inexistent interest in Chapareke inside their communities¹⁴. This is a particularly striking element in relation with its cosmogony, Onorúame is sad because nobody plays Chapahuela and this is the reason the world for Rarámuris is filled with plenty of difficulties.

¹⁴ After the documentary Chapareke: *La llave de la casa de dios* by Ángel Estrada, the Rarámuri culture was promoted by the state, but as it was not unexpected, these efforts ended with the electoral weather. The resource is not available online but as the Guggenheim Aguascalientes we screened it in the Punto Ciego Festival and you can ask the author for it to see it. Teaser: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_2Jb_vPbUg

The Chapareke exists in a kind of cultural crack or fissure out of which art can be made.

The purpose of this collaborative work is not to trace the Chapareke's anatomy, sound or manner of performance around the world to find a complete or perhaps endless genealogy. Nor is it to begin an ethnographic exercise that could reify the Chapareke granting its value only within the academy. Nor is it an attempt to locate its birth in time outside its own mystical context.

Instead, one of the purposes, in an ethnological thinking, is to find historic, geographic and mythological traces that could lead us to build our own relation to the Rarámuris Chapareke through a complex art practice we call Chapareke Hidrocálido. Therefore, through this problematizing, to answer (in an artistic intervention of an ethnomusicology) some of the questions arisen from the two Chapareke situations, in a way that enables an empowering culture appropriation and a proactive sociopolitical criticism exercise through the sharing of cosmologies and through the construction of art processes (as it is explained later).

Serendipity

In September 2014 my colleague, Rolando López, found by mistake a description that became the trigger for a new collaborative work. As part of a bigger project called: Guggenheim Aguascalientes he was looking for the way people used to talk in Aguascalientes about 100 years ago and on a short narrative story by the writer Jesús Fructuoso López, he read an intriguing musical instrument description:

One of those peasant brought with them a stick, with a string through each ends; plucked with the right thumb and situated on the mouth, he can make it vibrate, producing cadenced sounds with were modulate with the lips breathe;

the left hand fingers played the string to cushion or produce different tones.¹⁵

The differences made by the author in relation with the sonority of European classic musical tradition, the description's poetic ambiguity and the way he explained it's belonging to the nature soundscape, were more than an incentive to start a quest in the construction of this unknown instrument.

[...]easy to make, pitch limited [...]. In a hall where the piano plays Bellini compositions, or Schubert's melodies, very few sonority could be produced by this one stringed instrument; but in the countryside, [...]his accents become melodic ; as the nature tones, [...]solitude has its own sound voice, [...]which hurts the feelings and produces the inspiration.¹⁶

For us it was as much as an exercise of naïve conformation of an ancestral sound as a conscious act to reconstruct the past in an artistic exercise of criticism, since the narrative was the same in which this big metal foundry, Gran Fundición Central Mexicana, was recently working in Aguascalientes city, founded by Solomon Guggenheim; a foundry which left a lot of toxic waste polluting the city since then, in several ways –usually the government uses this toxic waste as material for the construction of roads.

At the beginning we made a lot of prototypes without achieving any successful results, until we came across a YouTube video¹⁷: Chapareke: La llave de la casa de Dios (Chapareke:

¹⁵ López, Fructuoso, *Un paseo campestre*, chapter III, on Giacinti, Alicia. Jesús F. López: *Un escritor Olvidado* – Universidad Autónoma de Aguascalientes, 2011, México. At:

<http://guggenheimaguascalientes.com/unpaseocampestre.php>

¹⁶ *Op. Cit.* López, Fructuoso

¹⁷ *Op. Cit.* Estrada, Ángel. Video.

The key of God's house) by Ángel Estrada in which the Rarámuri Antonio Camarillo Bautista appeared playing the Chapareke.

This opened a variety of paths to follow but some strategies slowly fell into place, we knew now how to make a functional Chapareke so we started to become aware of materials around us and opened our eyes for possibilities.

To have this attitude took us to recognize a potential situation to make a Chapareke: an extension of an avenue was being built in the city. Under the slogan "progress for all" the government was cutting many old trees with no promise of planting new ones (as we had seen according to its past actions and as we testified after). Furthermore, these avenues are built from the same toxic waste left by Solomon Guggenheim's foundry.

One of the fallen trees was displaying all its very enormous roots. We went there to cut one of the roots and we made a Chapareke.

Of course this took some time to figure out the right construction for each part, then finding the right strings and the adequate material for the tuning pegs, with only the video as a reference, it was a YouTube-based archeological reconstruction, but this strategy would allow us to conform a specific shape of the instrument, along with writing its own history and building a bridge between mythologies of both Chaparekes.

The heart

A particular identity constructed through art, was taking shape as Chapareke Hidrocálido. In other words, our environment gave us a social context where the instrument could be gestated with all the art's capacity to build meaning. In a clearly potential condition that positioned the

Chapareke in a decisive realm for us, our Chapareke was working from the inner earth to the air and eventually disappearing towards the sky (god's house), by means of sound. In the same way it was made from a root, from a dead tree cut because of the progress of modernity, and this is not just an artistic reading. Our damaged environment gave us a physical and social context where the instrument could gestate, imbued with all of art's capacity to make meaning. Made from a root from a dead tree cut to make 'progress' out of pollution, our Chapareke was working from the inner earth to the air and eventually disappearing to the sky (god's house) by means of sound.

Given the facts, we decided to take the responsibility to see the Chapareke Hidrocálido as a given key to us for articulating a paradigm where a power object built from recognizing its insertion in social reality, could serve as a point of resistance. Rereading the Rarámuri's myth, Chapareke Hidrocálido resulted in a specific version of the Rarámuri's Chapareke, with a dialogue between the different understandings of balancing the energies of the world.

We really are looking forward to apply the notion of the "God's house key" in a constructive approach. I.e. the Chapareke Hidrocálido is a tool for being able to write another history, another culture linked with the use of sound as an empowering act.

First approaches

Once the instrument was done we started to work with it. In the first piece we worked, the Chapareke Hidrocálido was inserted in a very forced way¹⁸, although the historic relations were there, the instrument was not triggering directly what we found in it. I was just an accompanying music. Anyway it was a fruitful situation we had to solve later.

¹⁸ <https://vimeo.com/107000844>

But what it was helpful at the time was the necessity to solve another more technical problems about the instrument. As the event was in an open space we had to think about amplification. We were interested in the filtering action of the mouth but amplifying this always ended up with the inherent amplification of the plucked strings. The nature of the Chapareke helped us to see the situation as an inseparable part of the instrument. At the end we attached a b-5 Behringer condenser microphone with a lot of danger to produce feedback.

Another job was deciding whether to specify sound production techniques or not, and if so, how would this be notated? It was a very engaging activity for me, and the exercise seemed to be going in a different direction from the close relation we had decided about the Chapareke Hidrocálido with its social context. So that was another problematic path to take. Although I had written some sketches for that piece¹⁹, a more complex solution was about to come.

Growing branch

I started bringing the instrument into what I believed was a free-context environment, to be able to think just in the sound. In other words, I approached the instrument simply as a sounding object freed of any social context or physical environment. I developed lots of what we can name “extended techniques”, preparing the instrument and activating its body with different materials and tools, a bow or a long screw for instance. Taking the instrument to a place where I could start from scratch and to see it as an object, as a sounding device, allowed other elements arose naturally. In this case the use of the voice appeared as an organic component of the

¹⁹ *Op. Cit.* Vimeo Link

performance. The investigation became a new independent piece, still linked to a body of work²⁰. The work has had numerous outputs since then.

The music I wrote concerned recognizing the two important sound processes that were occurring at playing the device, the mouth and on the other hand, the strings. Then to become fully aware of the different ways these actions could be produced, altered, expanded, and changed over time. So I decided to write in three staves. Indicating more the gesture than the produced sound. One to the actions that happen on the strings, and the other two for a divided behavior of mouth: the proximity from mouth toward the instrument and the size of the oral cavity. Dividing the interpreter actions allows to think on independent parameters and to combine them to obtain another result. Of course one more staff is also added when the voice is needed. As time is written traditionally in the horizontal axis, precise rhythm notations could be achieved on each parameter²¹.

However, instead of walking far from the the instrument, the instrument's identity was also growing. The composition of this contemporary music work was an act of awareness about the present capacities of the Chapareke Hidrocálido as an instrument for contemporary music, with all the historic dialogue that this may have. Again the social context was being part of the culture construction from the instrument, that is to say seeing the Chapareke as a piece not isolated from its cultural complexities.

²⁰ <https://soundcloud.com/omar-fraire/sinergia-serendipia>

²¹ http://www.guggenheimaguascalientes.com/chaparekehidrocalido_2_esto.php

Another Relations

In the meantime, we were also concerned to meet the author of the documentary *Chapareke: La llave de la casa de Dios*, to know more about *Rarámuri*'s culture. It was not difficult to find him; we came across a common friend in an exhibition about *Guggenheim Aguascalientes* where *Chapareke Hidrocálido* was an important element of it. So we contacted him to present his documentary in a festival I was organizing as a curator, in which one of the works was a new performance piece for *Chapareke Hidrocálido*, a piece where other elements start to appear, and a piece that took us to yet another level and relation with this work.

Ritual

In the frame of the *Punto Ciego* festival, we were preparing a different piece with the instrument. In this case we did it with more people involved. Working with the *Chapareke Hidrocálido* had showed us another inherent aspect of it, the latent displacement of boundaries, or even the blurring of them.

Soon we noticed of the gesture and movement embedded in the playing technique, and we came up with the idea of incorporated movement in the performance. In the same way, soil was always present in the back of our minds, and of course in the fabrication of the instrument. So that Rolando had some soil on a table to work with these relations. We played the instruments on it and we saw how the table was naturally amplifying the sound and also how the instrument left its trace on it, as we were moving while playing.

Something was being presenting before our perception: the presence and influence of the human body. One of our co-workers in the festival and in the *Guggenheim Aguascalientes*

Museum, Pilar Ramos, assumed this element as a part of a multiplicity that could be developed in a sort of unfolded space from this phenomenon.

The output was intriguing. The performance ended up as a ritual where three of us were playing the instrument over the table full of soil and a naked body was moving over rocks of toxic waste²², leaving traces in her skin²³. The interactions were multiple. Not only at the artistic level but also in the realm of the *Rarámuris* cosmology. After two rehearsals and one presentation we felt touched in an indescribable manner. We like to think this as an energetic situation in which a link with the indigenous heritage acts as a spiritual fact.

Pilar after explained the event beautifully: “Who knows what threads are we pulling”²⁴.



Illustration 1. Pilar Ramos, Omar Fraire and Jodie Buffalo experimenting with Chapareke and choreography.

²² This rocks are part of the legacy of Mr. Guggenheim, and belong to the Guggenheim Aguascalientes collection: <http://guggenheimaguascalientes.com/coleccion.php>

²³ *Op. Cit.*

²⁴ http://guggenheimaguascalientes.com/chaparekehidrocalido_2_proceso.php

Chapareke Hidrocálido the short documentary

This project became one of the interests for a film young student in Aguascalientes, Víctor Góngora who came to me with the initial aim to make a documentary about sound art in Aguascalientes, basically he wanted to speak about *Punto Ciego*, a festival I was developing since about three years. For the sake of help him to find his own definition of sound art, we invited him to one of the rehearsal of the recent *Chapareke Hidrocálido* project.

At the end he got interested in making a *Chapareke Hidrocálido*'s²⁵ documentary, which has been projected as a part of the student's work in the University's film department.

Una Raíz Para Dos Cielos - The Last Documentary

Recently we have realized a longer documentary about the original Chapareke, the Rarámuri Chapareke. I had the opportunity to go to the Copper Canyon in Chihuahua México, to research about it. This was possible thanks to the summer research stipend provided by Wesleyan University.

The results of this research have delimited the Chapareke Hidrocálido very clearly. Our approach is completely an artwork in which we create our small community and history about it, it is linked to Guggenheim Aguascalientes rather subtle, as the only link between them is Fructuoso López, the journalist who wrote about this sort of picnic trail where he listens for the first time an instrument that we assumed as the Chapareke. The same journalist who wrote against the conditions the workers had in the Guggenheim foundry. To admit Chapareke could be born in Aguascalientes, obeys more to a politic act of cultural appropriation in favor to the Guggenheim Aguascalientes Museum, than to a careful ethnomusicological premise to research about.

²⁵ <https://youtu.be/G6cwEYXRqVA>

Rarámuri culture is very marginalized nowadays, in part this decision has been taken voluntarily by the Rarámuris themselves, but the reasons are originated in the extreme poverty and the lack of strategies from the institutions to include them and save their culture. In addition, the regrettable presence of the drug trafficking, the “narcos” and their inherent entanglement with the government’s corruption, make their situation impossible for cultural development, not to mention the situation is not good enough for young people to try to learn how to play Chapareke.

We found Antonio Camilo, the oldest of the Chapareke players, but we didn’t find Guadalupe Estrada, people said he became an alcoholic after his wife died, they say he didn’t even play Chapareke anymore. Although we found a priest in Cusárare, one of the populations in the canyon, who played Chapareke rarely.

Those conditions deserve attention when the time comes to consider Chapareke as an instrument from other region different from the Rarámuri one. Even the Chapareke Hidrocálido project should be reconsidered entirely, as a fraternal branch, born for very different reasons and with very different purposes. For the next stage of the project we must talk about what can we do for the Rarámuri Chapareke and how our Chapareke is or could, affect it.

The research I did in the Rarámuri region enlightened me about those issues. Although the documentary we realized has very problematic use of language towards the Rarámuri culture, is a work in progress²⁶, and after I presented it for my last concert I have been working on how to elaborate a better edition. My friend, the multidisciplinary artist Xésar Tena, was in charge of the film.

²⁶ The work in progress can be watched here, with English subtitles:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q77dLyZogc0&t=388s>

Chapter III

Quotation Synergies

You see, I don't want to be pinned down to any position. My position is the lack of a position

Marcel Duchamp²⁷

For the fall of 2016, I was asked by my advisor to organize and perform a recital by myself. The requirement was quite interesting. It could be original work but should involve pieces by others. One of the aims was that the concert could throw a light on my own creative project by articulating a context for it in the work of others. In other words, the nature of this concert was to rehearse possible answers from a creative research that would help to find routes for writing this thesis, a task that was required for obtaining my master degree.

So, one of my principle goals was to identify a creative path that could lead through all these different creative forces I have encountered at Wesleyan and before. In order to achieve the purpose, to find a larger context for my own work, I needed first to clearly understand first my previous pieces more clearly, to solve how they led me to unexpected conundrums or creative problems; and, from that understanding build connections to those influences. I understood the thesis recital as this exercise. In which ultimately, I could present from a variety of relations, my own diverse concentrations in order to untangle a better understanding of my own work and, through that understanding, find paths to further work.

²⁷ Schwarz, Arturo. *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp*. Thames and Hudson, London, 1969, p. 194.

At that moment I had several and different directions in my interests and a determination to avoid a closed and unidirectional focus. Despite that, a strategy popped out from the planning: I had been working before in pieces around the notion of quotation, using the procedure of quotation as a device that triggered a number of creative actions through diverse media and consequently recontextualized the quoted source. Hence, starting from ideas that were *already-there*, I took the notion of quotation as a strategy for enabling a space of convergence for all of those directions my curiosities had been taken. In this way, I utilized materials generated in three basic ways: original pieces, pieces inspired by other authors, and pieces by other authors.

The concert was conceived as a single through composed work. The intention was to deploy pieces as elements that could function as generators of meaning –that is to say, intricate units with a potentiality to generate signification– allowing me to expose the complexity of their relations and a non-linear dialogue between them. The title, *Quotation_Synergies* attempted to convey my intentions for the thesis recital.

It was a solution that took many steps directed by a long reflection process.

First I realized the materials I was using were very varied in content and in media. Each piece was dealing with sound, space and sociality in different ways. Some of the pieces shared strong political message, while others were more experimental in their approach to sound, and I also had a few that were concerned with pitch relations, formal problems and instrumentation.

As material for the concert, I collected various works that I found influential and provided turning points in my own compositional development.

As original pieces, more on the side of music I had:

- 1) Two Fugues I had composed in 2003 in baroque style.
- 2) A new text-score piece for Bassoon, *Inverted Obelisk*.
- 3) A new piece for Viola da Gamba and Live Electronics, *Ganoko*.

As pieces by others I had:

- 4) *Star Networks at the singing point* by Ralph Jones.
- 5) *Time piece beacon* by Max Neuhaus.
- 6) *Telepathic piece* by Robert Morris.
- 7) *Victor Huerta* by Cristian Franco.

And finally as pieces related, appropriated, varied or inspired by other authors which might be seen as works of performance art:

- 8) *Politics of Rehearsal* a variation of a piece by Francis Alÿs.
- 9) A performance named *AXE*.
- 10) *Smell*, a video intervention.
- 11) *Breath breathing in Concert*, a staged communication with Duchamp.

So, how to relate those objects? The challenge was on how to establish a productive system based on the place in time these pieces would fit to act precisely as meaning generators. I was treating the event as a compositional problem. I was aware the moment of occurrence for each piece would generate particular dialogue with the other pieces within the timeline of the concert. Of course, the message changes according to the weight given by the placement of its constitutive elements. Hence, to decide their situation became a matter of exerting a shaping power over the possibilities of interpretation most available the audience.

Besides placement in time, it was also a matter of changing the perspective towards the works I was using. The pieces, treated as quotations, functioned as elements in a larger time construction. In other words, it was the overlap and cross-relation the way they operated the large form, developing a continuous intertextuality.

Dealing with transmission of sense, the Peirce's semiotics I had studied before, came to mind, almost intuitively, as a way to proceed with my creation strategy. This enabled me think of the constituent pieces of the concert as "signs" which:

[...] a sign may be simple or complex. Unlike Saussure, Peirce does not define the sign as the smallest unit of signification. Any thing[*sic*] or phenomenon, no matter how complex, may be considered as a sign from the moment it enters into a process of semiosis²⁸.

For me the way in which any phenomenon could be taken as something to be read, made enormous sense if the stage is thought as if it was a very sensitive space in which every perceivable molecule has the potentiality to take part in the piece –or in the meaning– that is happening there.

In this space of the possible, and through this notion, a piece of music could be used to signify both in itself and in its relations to others. Also, taking a complex phenomenon –as a piece actually is– as sign, is also the possibility to take its context into account, hence to let the meaning of each piece emerge on its own terms as well.

The next step in the process was then, to understand these elements were also susceptible to being treated as completed and separated art works, bringing forward their inner complexity by highlighting particular elements internal to the work or by taking their organic configuration as a potential structure for a moment of the concert. This approach led to a kind of "mixing process" overlapping some pieces and operating variations on others. A

²⁸ Everaert-Desmedt, Nicole. *Peirce's Semiotics*. In Louis Hébert Signo, Quebec, 2011, <http://www.signosemio.com/peirce/semiotics.asp>.

multilayered meaning space. In other words, the concert attempted to position the pieces as simultaneously elements of a larger frame and complete works in their own right.

However, taking a part of a piece and put it in relation with another part of another piece was the most fruitful tactic, as it resulted in a dissemination of several dialogues happening at the same time, each one taking place at a different level of deepness inside the texture of what was taking place in front of the audience.

Before going further, I should list the individual pieces which composed the event.

The context of the pieces as meaning generators

The pieces could be ordered as follows. In the concert however, some pieces overlapped themselves with autonomy, as will be explained in each case²⁹.

1. Star Networks at Onorúame's voice
2. Politics of Rehearsal
3. Victor Huerta
4. AXE
5. Time Piece Beacon
6. Telepathic piece/Music for solo performer/4'36''
7. Smell
8. Ganoko
9. Fugue I & II
10. Breath breathing in concert
11. Inverted Obelisk
12. Air From México

In order to reveal particularities of each piece, we must first, describe their characteristics and situate them in their respective contexts. Each piece has a special weight on history and relates to specific situations that need to be fully addressed, since later, these

²⁹ See the appendix for the concert score. Or download it here for higher resolution: <https://www.scribd.com/document/335895352/Quotation-Synergies-Guideline>

solo and with the group making their own realizations. The group is constituted of composers/performers mainly dedicated to creation and collaborative live performance practices around electroacoustic music and custom-built electronic devices for music. The CIE formed around the expansive installation Rainforest that they co-created with David Tudor is still active with involvements in sound installations, software and interactive media.³¹

Star Networks At The Singing Point is a description in engineering terminology of the method used for producing sound in the piece. It implements a feedback system running through nodes of analog circuit elements. These nodes constitute a network that can be built on solderless breadboards and its connections are able to be modified in live performance. The *singing point* makes reference to a point in which the gain of the feedback is tuned to produce a specific behavior consisting in a subtle oscillation from sound, between stability and unpredictability.

The performance instructions for the piece specify a number of conditions.³² Fixed and variable passive circuit elements should be used, they should have a wide range of values, they should be connected freely. For the output, amplifiers should be used and controlled via gain; control of their polarity is also required. The use of other signal-processing elements and automated controls is not allowed. Crescendo and diminuendo should be avoided.

The Singing Point

These settings determine the nature of the sound behavior. The rules of operation for this system further define the structure of the piece. At least five complexes of star networks

³¹ The piece was basically about sounds electronically derived from the resonant characteristics of physical materials, according to David Tudor. Several versions of it were done up to 1973. <http://davidtudor.org/Works/rainforest.html>

³² Jones, Ralph. "Composer's Notebook: Star Networks at the Singing Point," *Leonardo Music Journal*, Vol. 14, 2004, pp. 81-82.

should be built and sound independently through separate speakers. The performer must find a singing point for each of the feedback loops generated through each of the network complexes. Ralph Jones points out this must be monitored before being exposed to the audience. Getting the feedback to sing can be achieved by changing elements on the breadboard, adjusting gains and rewiring networks. Once a singing point is found at the monitoring side, it is ready to sing in its speaker and be thrown to the audience, making just subtle adjustments in order to preserve the instability of the oscillation. The challenge for the performer is to find new singing points for each network in succession.

The concept of the *singing point* is crucial for the overall structure of the piece as much as its sound. The work was a piece that Ralph Jones used to execute himself, but later he made a notation for the Composers Inside Electronics group taking advantage of their high degree of understanding of circuitry.³³ Its execution calls for a high sensibility to locate and establish a quasi-predictable behavior in the oscillation, and demands a developed hearing intuition when it comes to maintaining that singing state in a feedback stream.³⁴

Another skill that's required is an ability to make musical decisions; that comes out of training and experience. [...] you have to be able to recognize when a sound is tuned according to directions given in the score. [...] all I say is, 'Tune for instability in the oscillations'.³⁵
[...]
That's actually a pretty complex task. [...] You have to make choices quickly in order to get a sound out of so that you can evaluate what you've got and perhaps pull another sound out of the texture for returning.³⁶

³³ Minkowsky, John. Interview with Ralph Jones. Buffalo, 1980, p 1.

³⁴ In its execution, however, the notion of a naïve spirit is lurking around the general idea, as we'll describe it later.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p 6.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p 5.

The Instrument / Performance

Clearly Ralph Jones was very aware of the novelty of the instrument, as he speculates very cautiously that, ‘Instrument’ could be an inaccurate word to define what is used to play the piece.³⁷ Starting from a rather traditional conception of what an instrument is –a tool relegated to expressive purposes– he paraphrases Cage³⁸ to hack this concept stating “I want the technique to fail[...] to control those circuit elements”. The failure of control is central to the musical identity of the instrument and of the performance. The network of circuit nodes relies on multiple paths for the feedback loop tuned to enable unstable transitions between paths. The difficulty of finding these tunings is identified as a strategy for undermining the controlling influence of the performer: “This is another part of the confounding process; there’s simply so much to do that you can’t stop to think about where it’s going”. The instrument as a device that thwarts expressive control, places the performer in an overloaded condition and with just enough time to tune a network and trade it for another. Sonic insight and intuition is essential to providing this flow, but the interpretation is derived from the nature unstable nature of the instrument-piece and the good intentions of the performer that can only momentarily gain any level of control over only some aspects of the situation.

The musical performance paradigm the piece defines is a highly crafted system where instrument and interpretation are entangled and exposed as unable to fix the trajectory of a

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p 4.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p 4. “[...] I believe in ‘Lecture on Something’, a sentence which says something like: ‘A technique, in order to be useful, must fail to control the elements which are subjected to it.’[...]That kind of summarizes my attitude in making this piece”
“a technique to be useful (skillful that is) must be such that it fails to control the elements subjected to it.” *Silence* p. 154

never-ending stream of sound energy that takes multiple paths oscillating –*singing* thanks to the same entanglement- between predictability and instability.

In the documents about the work³⁹, these networks are always referred to as an instrument:

The *instrument*, on which the work is played is made of unusual found electronic parts, and of amplifiers from discarded tube and transistor equipment. These components are arranged so that they may readily be connected, using colored wire sets, to form sound-producing circuits.

[...] My SN instrument is a rather large, clumsy, and significantly more sculptural breadboard than those that prevail in industry.⁴⁰

More importantly, the structural unity of all the parts of the work flow from its status as a circuit design and this was an explicit component of Jones' compositional strategy. He remarks:

I'd been interested for a long time in trying to determine as many compositional aspects of a piece as I could at the level of electronic design. So, I tried to find a way in which to make a potentially collaborative work defined at the circuit design level.⁴¹

The performer is asked to build his own instrument, in part, to provide the sound a different personality in each case. As each network has a speaker, an individual singing could be heard from each performer. The clarity of each voice starts from the moment each instrument is assembled. In that sense, decisions taken by the performer at the time of building the network are reflected in the sound and behavior of the instrument.

³⁹ Documents collected and in custody of Michael Johnsen & Matthew Wellins at: http://ubumexico.centro.org.mx/text/emr/interviews_media/inside_electronics/jones/star-networks_notes.pdf

⁴⁰ John Minkowsky, Op. Cit., p 6

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p 7.

After the first performance at the Kitchen in New York City, with David Tudor, Martin Kalve, and John Driscoll; the link between composition, instrument and performance became more clear as collaboration:

About the collaborative process, this performance reaffirmed my conviction that an explicit underlying design which forms the basis for the collaboration is necessary.⁴²

Since the process of changing interconnections between networks and even assembling components on the solderless breadboard has also to be realized at the moment of the performance, this group collaboration starts as collective system of humans producing networks, executing the function of finding the signing point at the same time in which the instrument is being built.

This can be possible due to the notion of star network applied to the piece. A star network can be easily built with three or more passive circuit elements: capacitors, inductors, transformers. Several networks in between a feedback loop, can produce the state in which a singing point can be tuned. This creates multiple feedback paths that serve to create instability.

Having created this technique allows to define the different phases of the piece in synch. With this notion, a collaborative strategy can be founded, the composed comportment can be set up for to look for the “unstable oscillatory modes”. Several compositional aspects of a piece are –again- plotted at the level of electronic design.

Acting on the theory that one could, perhaps with a naïve spirit, design sound-producing circuits in concert, I’ve sought and found a basic technique for the design of complex oscillators which can be applied, by trial and error, to produce a world of sounds[.]⁴³

⁴² *Ibid.*, p 14.

⁴³ Program notes for the concert Merce Cunningham Dance Company with Ralph Jones. October 4th, 1980. Merce Cunningham Studio, New York City.

We can see that although the piece requires considerable knowledge of electronics and an understanding of the underlying musical consideration, it is also possible and observed by the that an ingenuous approach is also co-present, a side effect of the basic design's fundamental unpredictability.

The incapacity of controlling the path of the energy flux serves as a strategy for confounding the performer both a feature of the instrument and a *failure* of the technique. And the naïve spirit is equally present when it comes to the choice of components used in the networks. Ralph was collecting components from surplus houses, old electronics where he could find what he calls 'strange components', electronic elements for which it was difficult to find specific information.

That's why I like to use components that I perhaps can't identify, because they do things that, were I to choose only components that I could identify, I would not achieve. That's why I like the performer to be confounded to a degree by the performance task, so that excessive judgment about what's going to be heard doesn't enter in to the situation[.]⁴⁴

Finally, the freedom of the collaborative work at the stage of the construction of the instruments, is transformed into the gestation of the piece as an organism.

[The score] does allow freedom of choice, for example, in the construction of the instrument, where I think that's proper, and actually I desire it. But I can't think of a way to communicate the idea graphically without allowing too much freedom of choice in areas I don't want to give up. I don't want the performers to be free, I want the circuits to be free.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ John Minkowsky, Op. Cit., p 26.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p 24.

The sound

The sonic aesthetics followed by the piece around the sound deal with finding different rhythmic complexity, and an increasing complex timbre; both produced by varying irregular structure and an interest in organic behavior.

One of the basic things in the back of my mind when I hit on the SN design technique was a desire to introduce unpredictability not only in terms of change with time, but also in terms of timbre and timbral changes. This design technique does that.⁴⁶

The rhythmic instability of the singing point happens to be a predominant expression of the sound aesthetic in this piece and was an underlying concern before *Star Networks*, when the composer was working with ultrasound:

I have always considered alteration of the time sense of a signal to be a more significant distortion. I was more interested in the sense of the insect songs, and various sorts of non-biological sources that I uncovered, than I was in an exact reproduction of the harmonic intervals or the melodic contours.⁴⁷

And although the applied technique to the piece's circuitry, produces a wide variety of sounds "everything from things that sound like birds or animals to things that sound like machinery or running water", the underlying principle of creating most of the aspects of composition from the electronic design, holds the sound matter as a whole and operates from the level of compositions to the musical experience.

The sounds are unified by the particular type of instability that they exhibit, and by their source in the single design technique. I think that commonality is perceivable when

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p 23.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p 3.

you listen the piece, whether or not you know about the design.⁴⁸

The overall time line is determined by the approximate time the performer needs to tune a new singing point. Each feedback loop should sound about five minutes before being substituted for another. The piece is about sixty minutes long.

Finally, a technical consideration for it, leads me to make a more social reading of SN. Instability in the oscillations is pursued, both to diverge from the previously tuned singing and to avoid the domination of a single path in the network. If a single tone is obtained from a connection, we can argue that the feedback loop is stuck in an undesired behavior. Thus, one of the most important instructions in the score is preserving that autonomy in the energy flow –giving us our *singing point*– an autonomy that is not engaged with any fixed route for its existence.⁴⁹ Although this autonomy is found by the performers, it happens nonetheless, in a different strata than the performer's actions, and is conceptually detached from them. Indeed, to perform a tuning action and have it become an audible gesture would be a performance error. It is yet another notion of freedom, besides those already quoted, that has to do the liberation not only of the circuits but of the music too.

It's very distinct from improvisation. [...] in a jazz piece, [...] the overall design is done collaboratively as improvisation. Jazz, in that sense, operates in the same way. However, this music is not improvisation because, if it is correctly played, there is no element of self-expression.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ John Minkowsky, Op. Cit., p 9.

⁴⁹ This latent meanings –that will be developed later– made me use the piece as one of my influences for the fall thesis recital.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p 25.

Clearly *Star Networks* is an innovative piece at various levels. It could be seen and used as an instrument, it is a distinct statement of musicianship, an early live-electronic composition and a collaborative social practice. The core of its strength arises from how these layers are bounded and developed together as a unique idea, departing technically and conceptually from electronic design as parameter of composition and performance.

Politics of Rehearsal

*In any case, how can art remain politically
significant without assuming a doctrinal
standpoint or aspiring to become social
activism?*

Francis Alÿs

Sometimes Doing Something Poetic Can
Become Political and Sometimes Doing
Something Political Can Become Poetic
(2007)

Francis Alÿs is a Belgian artist who has worked and lived in México since early 80's. Alÿs arrived after the 1985 earthquake –a particularly violent quake (Richter magnitude 8.0) that left almost the entire middle region of the country damaged– as a part of a French assistance program. He was assisted in rebuilding public works as a part of his Belgian required civil-service. Alÿs stayed in México and changed his name from “Francis de Smedt” to “Francis Alÿs”, in order to avoid bureaucratic issues with Belgian authorities.

Having left behind his architecture career and walking the chaotic streets of México City, Alÿs starts to experiment with performance art in 1991. Quite varied in media, his work is today acknowledged, among other achievements, for blurring borders between poetics and politics. His position as a European immigrant provides him with a very specific relation inside and outside Mexican society.

Mexican history is demarked by economic, civil struggles and a constant search for a national identity caught between its underlying indigenous roots and an always changing western modernity. On the other hand, those unstable conditions have been the breeding ground for creative practices. This is captured in the words of Andre Breton when he declared in 1938 that México was “The surreal country par excellence”.⁵¹

Politics of rehearsal is a 2007 video piece that shows the rehearsal of a previous piece entitled *Rehearsal II*. In a small theater stage, a female dancer is getting undressed accompanied by piano and soprano singer. A scene conductor and Alÿs guide the performance. Voice over, the speech of Cuauhtémoc Medina⁵² is heard talking about modernity, México and their relation as a never ending rehearsal, “rethinking the implication of the rehearsal as a comment on modernity”, as he states at the beginning.

The video starts with the singer warming up his voice, followed by a video recording of broadcast with the inaugural speech of then president of United States Harry S. Truman in 1949.

At the beginning of his speech, Mr. Truman sets up with clarity, that the solution of poverty in the US could be achieved through adopting a modern approach:

We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. [...] I believe that we should make available to peace-loving peoples the benefits of our store of technical knowledge in order to help them realize their aspirations for a better life.⁵³

⁵¹ Barnitz, Jacqueline. *Twentieth Century Art of Latin America*. University of Texas Press, 2001.

⁵² A very influent curator and art historian from México.

⁵³ Video at: <http://francisalys.com/politics-of-rehearsal/>, min 03' 25''.

A notion of underdevelopment comes from this speech, and establish the idea of poverty as a state of waiting for the promised development, as if these countries were now in the way for a better future.

After this introduction the presentation of the title appears with an illuminating, quasi poetic and a bit pessimistic description below:

Politics of Rehearsal
is a metaphor of Latin America's ambiguous affair with
Modernity, forever arousing, and yet, always delaying the
moment it will happen.⁵⁴

This piece appears in a México where the discussions about defining our cultural historical time is always latent, and in an academic situation where these topics had started to be discussed in Mexican Universities⁵⁵.

Nevertheless, here the definition of Mexican modernity is given with poetic lucidity, in an always evolving environment, accompanied by the narrative of Cuauhtémoc. Instead of proposing an already demarked definition of modernity, Francis enacts poetically what he thinks about it and leaves the definition as something in continuous construction. The realm of performance and video allows him to build a more complex meaning of modernity, a meaning achieved through an apparently simple action charged with a political message.

After the introduction, the piece could be seen in two simultaneous parts, the rehearsal of the stripper and the musicians and the speech by Cuauhtémoc. This dialogue is shaping the experience of the rehearsal in real time, and at the same time having a narrator, gives a distance from the rehearsal, as if we were observers also shaping the event, continuously. The stripper

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, min 05' 05''.

⁵⁵ As a person that has taught in México, I can acknowledge the interest from university programs in reading foundational texts by Lyotard, Bauman, Lipovetsky and Jameson, which are actually still popular in Mexican art academy these days.

and the musicians are in a close relation; the stripper disrobes when the music sounds, when they stop rehearsing, she starts over. Hence, the promise of the wanted object is attached to the condition of accomplishing that musical piece. Remembering the initial description, this process leads us to read the rehearsal as indeed, the metaphor of Latin America's modernity.

The time of the rehearsal is actually not real time, is a time that is used to get to the real aim. A process that describes the permanent distance between the goal and the start. A space in intimate relation with the distance brought to life by Truman, who, by enacting the detachment between underdevelopment and development in speech and policy, serves to articulate it as an intrinsic condition of modernity in the "global south".

The words by Cuauhtémoc work differently in the video, the rehearsal is unfolded yet again to offer a discussion of the piece itself as a palimpsest that goes beyond the rehearsal. It is also a dissertation built on the fly, reproducing the methods of what we are watching. The concept of rehearsal is taken in several directions. The video is made as a documentation of the performance; it shows not a finished piece but a development to get somewhere. Cuauhtémoc is also rehearsing, elaborating an essay on rehearsals, in the middle of one of these. It is precisely this talking that takes the performance to a more discursive political realm, he explores how the discourse of development could work as a political force, originated in the promise by politicians.

On the structure of temporality, the time is broken in different dimensions, time of production, time of realization, the autonomous time from music, the upholding of time by the stripper, the historical time exposed by Cuauhtémoc discourse, time implied in the idea of modernity; all of them deployed in the video as the work. And in addition, the political and paradoxical comment about the worktime: the labor of the piece is the piece. The time defined by worktime.

Politics of Rehearsal is in fact the last of a group of pieces by Alÿs related with the concept of rehearsal. The first of them *The Rehearsal* from 1999, is about a Volkswagen trying to ascend a hill, the plot is this:

- Plot: A car (VW-beetle) repeatedly tries to ascend a hill without ever succeeding.
- The driver listens to a tape of the rehearsal of the song “El Péndulo” (The Pendulum)
- While the musicians play, the car goes up.
- While the musicians practice, the car goes down.⁵⁶

A second piece entitled *Rehearsal II*, is the origin of *Politics of Rehearsal*. It is the video of the stripper getting nude during the rehearsal of Schubert’s *lied der Mignon*. Here is the score for the action:

- Mechanics: The stripper listens to a rehearsal session of the soprano with the pianist.
- While the pianist plays and the soprano sings, the stripper undresses.
- When the soprano or the pianist lose track over a musical phrase and stop, the stripper holds her act.
- While the soprano and the pianist discuss the musical phrase in question, the stripper dresses up again.

The rehearsal session will go on until the stripper completes her act.⁵⁷

In these previous pieces, a musical score is used structurally for the management of the action in the space, as in *Politics of Rehearsal* and how the pieces inhabit a space where politics and poetic function as both techniques and content. The politics involved in the poetic enactment of a historical time inherent to modernity, resembles the surrealistic situation in which societies like Mexico’s are confronted with progress. Or in own Alÿs’ words:

[*Rehearsal I*] also recalls the all-too familiar scenario of a society that wants to stay in an indeterminate sphere of

⁵⁶ Ferguson, Russell. Francis Alÿs: *Politics of Rehearsal*. Hammer Museum, Los Angeles 2007, p 78.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p 90.

action in order to function, and that needs to delay any formal frame of operation to define itself against the imposition of Western Modernity.⁵⁸

It is not surprising then, that another very accurate political conception of time is addressed by the commandant Galeano, the Chiapas guerilla leader:

[...] a struggle between a clock operated by a punch card, which is [the president's] time, and an hourglass which is ours. The dispute is over whether we bend to the discipline of the factory clock or [the president] bends to the slipping of the sand.⁵⁹

Victor Huerta

Víctor Huerta is an intriguing individual from a rural area of Zapotlanejo, in the state of Jalisco in México, he lives in a small impoverished location called 'La Purísima' with a population about seven hundred habitants. He has mental disability which makes it difficult for him to communicate through traditional language structures. He thinks he speaks English while producing senseless sounds. This began when he met a 'gringo' who was visiting the town as a tourist, Víctor heard him speak and he learned the English phonetics by ear and used them to articulate his imaginary speech. A natural creative act whose social cracks were later revealed by the social sensibility of an artist.

The Mexican visual artist Cristian Franco presents him in a video⁶⁰ in which Víctor speaks his non-existent language, and at the same time Cristian juxtaposes subtitles that come from texts by the Mexican anarchist Ricardo Flores Magón, some of them altered by Cristian. In this way, the incongruent words by Víctor come alive decoded through through a powerful

⁵⁸ Alÿs, Francis. *Politics of Rehearsal*, in Blue Orange 2004: Francis Alÿs. Berlin 2004, p 10.

⁵⁹ *Op. Cit.* Ferguson, Russell, p 86.

⁶⁰ The video can be watched here: <http://impakt.nl/channel-2/videos/curated/cristian-franco-victor-huerta-2009-2/>

anarchist speech and a rural landscape as a background with extensive but subtle connections to that text.

The place where Victor is situated recalls the rural environment where injustice was a part of daily experience in the days of Flores Magón. In fact, the countryside continues to be one of the more marginalized areas in México. For example, in La Purísima, just 1% of the population have access to the internet.⁶¹

So, even though those texts speak about demands and social problems in an old México, the current situation, the political and economic issues make them sound nevertheless, very up-to-date. They are a sign of a perpetual crisis in my country.

The video suggests an underlying meaning in which Magón's voice becomes valid when it comes to realize our problems have never gone either. His words return from death and give to this Mexican outsider a voice. In this process, the juxtaposition of Magón's texts with Victor's language suggests what could be some possible similarities between the spoken and the written words; thus, Victor's language could be read as if it had been provoked by an instinctive or unwanted biological resistance against the straitjacket of language structures. A cancer of language, so to speak.

Or conversely, the potential dissidence one can read from the act of creating one's own language due to a situation called disability. Refusal of a hegemonic order invokes the spirit of Magón, or even more, his rebellious ideals. This trans-corporeal communication seems to be emphasized by video editing in which Cristian makes the most inflammatory invitations by Magón coincide with the grave tone of some Victor's phrases⁶².

⁶¹ Data from INEGI (National Institute of Statistics and Geography)
<http://en.mexico.pueblosamerica.com/i/la-purisima-44/>

⁶² Like in the end when the subtitles say: "The end is near..." in the minute 2' 29"

The elegant gesture of finding and overlapping the rural poverty of that place and a discourse against the causes of that poverty articulated and incarnated by a real habitant of these injustices focuses the energy of his invented speech into a political realm. In this sense the piece works as a protest opportunity for Víctor and for Magón, both characters embody a discourse subjected to marginalization, alterity and history.

The translator position assumed by the artist is enormously influential, as the only mediator who can interpret an encrypted message, medium and artist work as a catalyzer able to trigger the most unsuspected rebellions. It makes Victor a guerrilla leader, by sculpting the evocative acoustic energy of his declarations into a reincarnation of one of the most important –and occluded– anarchists in México. Hence in *Víctor Huerta*, a double voice is recovered: one from the obstruction of the present and another from the rejected pages of history.

The fact that English is the language Victor is trying to build is not fortuitous. In México, the little towns of the countryside lose their young population, who either emigrate to the bigger cities or to the US in search of better opportunities. Also, the influence of US culture in the small towns is, in the commercial dimension, quite strong. People who migrate successfully, return to visit and fill the places and their families with the paraphernalia of consumerism as tokens of their success. For many people, to speak English is a way to excel. Furthermore, the place where Víctor comes from is almost not populated by indigenous people, only % 0.3 of them speaks an indigenous language⁶³, Víctor is the only one who distorts, scrambles English and makes a new version of it, a language that appears to be very close to English but that is not.

The subtitles, extracted from several texts written by Magón, are presented in this order:

⁶³ *Ibid.*

A new revolutionary force is now necessary anticlerical and with a vision towards the future
left for us

Is this what we want?

The peasant union hit rock bottom and it's a socialism consequence [*sic*]

As stated by the press

It's the failure of our political executors and their central laws

Them who consider themselves called to lead us for all the eternity

Those who want to sell us at public auction between two captains

Being able to fight against capitalism without fighting the state it's a lie

It's a lie that the UN⁶⁴ represents a force itself, It's an organization without autochthonous rules.

Without ultimate goals it's a flock of sheared sheep

My former employers are now generals, governors, secretaries of state

And some of them are even presidents of México

They are rich, famous and powerful whereas I'm poor, dark, ill, almost blind

Rotting myself between this human flock trying to stay stand

Wake up

You heretics

Thieves

Anti-Semites

Fugitives

Cheaters

Fight

Against the menopausal ill world

Mexicans, the moment is ripe now

Let's possess every existing thing

Don't pay contributions, don't pay the rent of the house you live in.

Take the institutions to work in common

Making use of the excellent machinery the bourgeoisies own

Keep to ourselves the fabrics [*sic*], workshops and stores

The end is near

We must choose a new governor, that is a new yoke

Or the redeeming expropriation and the abolition of every minority imposition

Religious, political or from any other order

We are facing a new massive ruling

Which is within our education, it's all written

It is important to recall that some of the texts are modified by the artist. Positioning
himself as a translator, the artist takes the liberty of rearranging the phrases and even adding

⁶⁴ This is part of the artist's rewrite, Ricardo Flores Magón died in 1922, the UN didn't exist as such.

some words to them. Thus the words are the raw material from which the artwork is sculpted and those quotations acquire added significance from their participation in that work. In other words, a formal quote must be rooted in real history to bring historical legitimacy to the discourse of the art work; but as artistic material, the quote becomes a means to approach or suggest veracity. In order to squeeze a truth from the signs which contain it, they may need to be bent, their scope expanded, and their original function subverted. Always dealing with the given information, the action of the artist consists of the appropriation of that material to exert his creative will, a way to manage the power already implied in the speech, modifying it or articulating it through his intervention.

But recalling the very sound of the words, the intriguing speech quality they have by themselves, makes it possible for the auditory encounter with this speech to evoke the sound poetry of, for instance, Kurt Schwitters and lead us rethink the significance of sound over language. A cultural transmutation process between indigenous and Euro-Mexican culture that distinguish the artistic practices I have been involved in.

Victor Huerta is a video from 2009 and has a duration of three minutes and four seconds.

AXE

AXE is a performative action on stage that builds its ultimate meaning when its second and third parts are presented. This second part is a video and the third one is another performative action. The three pieces as a time process framing the full concert, and about how and why this stratagem was implemented, will be developed later in detail.

AXE is a popular deodorant label; in México it is mostly used by teenagers. It is known by its TV commercials where they promise the attention from the kind of women who obey the

TV's canon of beauty. However the piece I prepared for the concert was a response to comments I found in a documentary about immigration.⁶⁵ In it, a white middle age North-American man talks about the problems he has living near to the border between México and the United States of America.⁶⁶ He describes how many people pass by near his house but, very interestingly, he specifies that he is not afraid of them and that he understands they come in the search of better jobs. His complaints are directed at the side effects of the long hikes they take to cross the border. Because of the number of people crossing the border, this neighbor was concerned about the garbage they leave, on one hand, and on the other, about their smell. Because of the number of people crossing the border, this neighbor was concerned about the garbage they leave, on one hand, and on the other, about their smell.

They have to change their clothes; they have to get out of the clothes which they came out the border with. They got more clothes with them... well this is disgusting and yet it's a truth. It's... it's the truth and it's a fact and... and I don't know how people watching this will take it, I don't know if you want edit this out... it's because they smell, it's their smell. A group of them can walk by, can walk right through here and, if I come through here in ten, five ten, maybe in fifteen minutes I can still smell them [...] they have to change that, you'll see enough a lot of perfumes... AXE is real popular, AXE body sprays, deodorants and things like that, enough a lot...⁶⁷

And he goes on, describing how the Mexican odor is different than middle eastern ones and other illegal immigrants, he finishes saying that non-US people say that Americans smell like hamburgers. Rather than complain about the possible racism in the comment, I decided to

⁶⁵ Barbey, Stephanie & Peter, Luc. *Broken Land*. Swiss 2015.

<https://weshare.me/d50b78037f5ceb09/Broken.Land.DOC.VOSTFR.WEBRip.x264-ABiTBOL.mkv>

⁶⁶ I used this same documentary for a previous related work, I will talk more about it in following chapters.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

redirect this discourse about the smell and use it as a device that allowed me to use a material I had never used before for a composition: the odor.

AXE utilizes the words by the man in the documentary, as a hyperbolic trigger. It is an action that consists in using a bottle of spray until its finished. In this process, another boundary would be crossed, the smell of *AXE* would flood all the hall for a while, taking to the extreme the implicit idea from that neighbor in that part of the documentary. The audience is then affected not just by the sound but by the smell, reenacting the situation lived at the border by the man in the documentary. And establishing with that, the tone of the concert, in other words, that the materials and communication I wanted to deploy, were beyond the things that you can just see or hear.

I see *AXE* as much as a sound piece as a performance one, in the sense that, the use of sound is necessary but it is a consequence of using odor as material. Conversely, the smell is the surplus of the performance, but at the same time is the core of the piece. The sound gets more weight after it is connected with Neuhaus' *Time Piece*, but paradoxically the use of smell –the core of the piece– itself gets its explanation a little bit later. The action stays there as an open question, at least for now.

One possible antecedent I have knowledge is *Inert Gas Series/Helium, Neon, Argon, Krypton, Xenon. From a Measured Volume to Indefinite Expansion* from 1969 by the conceptual artist Robert Barry, in which he lets scape different inert gases escape. Although he was interested in the use of a material that could not be detected –not even by odor– the piece is still about letting an invisible gas escape.

Certain differences become clearer when we frame this piece in the artistic practices that had to do with the dematerialization of the art object, while these practices tended to erase any trace of the piece, even its context; *AXE* was making an explicit use of what this material was, a deodorant being used as it is.

Closer, there is another piece by William Wegman, *Deodorant*⁶⁸ from 1972, where the artist video records himself using a deodorant body spray in an attempt to criticize how the product promises unrealistic features on TV. William appears in the video using the spray until it foams up and looks awful. In this case his comment is absolutely critic and social in a way, like *AXE*. Nevertheless, *AXE* is not a completed action until the other two parts appear, it is either a video and the comment is no exactly about the deodorant or about undermining an advertisement, *AXE* is actually making real use of the features of the deodorant in a live performance, and the smell is actually present.

Time Piece Beacon

A piece by Max Neuhaus from 2006, belongs to a category that he calls “moment” or “time pieces”, other works by him like *Stommeln* from 2007, and *Graz* from 2003 are in this category. Neuhaus explains that these kind of pieces deal with the idea of sound as a signal in a collectivity, but instead of merely producing a sound into the community as the finality of these works, Neuhaus wants the disappearance of the sound to resonate and accentuate their perception of the sounds around them:

A sound signal is a communicator, the first form of broadcasting, a medium that carries information to people in many different places simultaneously. [...]
I call one group of my sound works Moment or Time Pieces. They are artworks which take the form of communal sound signals. The basic idea of these works,

⁶⁸ http://www.ubu.com/film/wegman_deodorant.html

though, is to form the sound signal with a silence rather than a sound.

Instead of a bell which begins with a sudden clang and gradually dies away, this concept is precisely the opposite.⁶⁹

It is particularly clear the explanation he gives with a colloquial example of a coffee-grinding machine in a café. The particular situation when the machine turns on, people ignore it by just increasing the volume of their chat, their ears forget the noise and when the machine gets off, there is a moment where silence makes its presence evident.

This piece starts imperceptibly, blending with the surrounding sounds, always in a constantly increasing volume, a long crescendo. When the listener is becoming aware of the sound, he stops it suddenly, with the intention of getting the background environmental sound to the foreground. Its disappearance makes the listener aware of a sound layer that was previously there.

In this silent moment, for a few seconds after the sound has gone, a subtle transparent aural afterimage is superimposed on the everyday sounds of the environment, a spontaneous aural memory or reconstruction perhaps, shared by all who notice it, engendered by the sound's disappearance.⁷⁰

Neuhaus identifies communication as part of sound's history.

Sound has been used for simultaneous communication among the inhabitants of communities in both eastern and western civilizations since antiquity. In Europe, the church bell had become a definitive force in communities. It was such a strong unifying factor that the limits of the community itself were defined by its range – if you lived

⁶⁹ http://www.max-neuhaus.info/openforms/timepieces/Time_Pieces.pdf

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

beyond where you could hear it, you lacked the daily information necessary to be a participant in society.⁷¹

The idea of communication clarifies some of their significance. They produce a sign that ties together a community through the act of listening or in this case through the awareness at the same time, that something was not being listened to. In his explanation he brings an historical edge to the game and provides to sound, the capability to define a topography.

But when doing it in opposite way that a bell does, the *Time Piece Beacon* shows us more about our auditory conditions than about its social complexities. It is more about noticing the absence by its sudden presence. It does determine certain space where the peak of the piece can be heard, but this space is not designed by the piece as a part of the idea. Nevertheless, the characteristic of being a signal does remain, and paradoxically announces its disappearing at the same time that brings the background as this essential signal. It allows to be read as indicating a border between what is perceived with attention and what is not perceived attentively.

Telepathic Piece

The process that happened since Duchamp's Ready-Mades led among many other concerns, to a special type of work that was concerned with the absence of object, or more precisely with the change of focus about the materiality of a work of art. One tendency of this kind of the artwork is the Conceptual Art started in the 60's. A way of working pieces where the focus was more centered in the idea or concept than in an object, and that drove art to ask questions about

⁷¹ *Op. Cit.* http://www.max-neuhaus.info/openforms/timepieces/Time_Pieces.pdf

its own nature; even assigning value to that capacity. The conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth even states that the value of art inhabits on how much its nature is questioned.

The “value” of particular artists after Duchamp can be weighed according to how much they questioned the nature of art; which is another way of saying “what they added to the conception of art” or what wasn’t there before they started.⁷²

These conceptual and ontological preoccupations resulted in the increased importance of language to these practices. Text pieces, which largely originated in the proto-Fluxus “Events” of George Brecht became a common practice in visual art.

Event scores were present too, from Henry Cowell⁷³ to Fluxus, pieces where an exercise of mind was needed in order to have the piece happening:

COLLECTING PIECE

Collect sounds in your mind that
You have overhead through the week,
Repeat them in your mind in different
orders one afternoon.

1963 autumn⁷⁴

Robert Barry, a conceptual artist has been working since late 60’s on the production of works of arts which are non-material, using a variety of invisible media. The same year of *Telepathic Piece* immaterial works were done by him, such as the *Inert gas series* where he

⁷² Kosuth, Joseph. *Art After Philosophy and After Collected Writings* 1966 - 1990. MIT Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1991, p 18.

⁷³ The event idea started in Cowell’s philosophy of music, applied later by Higgins and Cage.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fluxus#Event_score

⁷⁴ Ono, Yoko. *Grapefruit*. Simon & Schuster, NY, 2000, p. 24.

released gases like helium into the atmosphere like the more known *Radiation Piece*, ore one year before *Carrier Wave* in which Barry used the carrier waves of a radio station for a prescribed length of time "not as a means of transmitting information, but rather as an object."⁷⁵

Barry's *Telepathic Piece*, exists through its appearance in the catalogue, which displayed Barry's will to transmit thought art outside of language and image via telepathy. Microwaves and telepathy were being explored by scientists and military and deployed on both sides of the Cold War at this time. He explains he was:

[...] dealing with the electronic energy which takes place in the body itself. And I have always been involved in telepathy and parapsychological phenomena, and worked along those lines using mental energy as a medium.⁷⁶

We can acknowledge Robert Barry was very much involved with the electrical of the body and with his work with psychic, telepathic, energetic and radioactive waves. Barry waves places it beyond the limits of the perception, crossing a boundary with a very elegant gesture consisting in actions that could be even event scores. This *Telepathic Piece* consisted in a sentence printed on the catalogue at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver.

ROBERT BARRY

Telephatic Piece, 1969

During the Exhibition I will try to communicate telepathically a work of art, the nature of which is a series of thoughts that are not applicable to language or image.

⁷⁵ Stiles, Kristine; Howard Selz, Peter, *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, University of California Press, 1996, p. 839.

⁷⁶ Barry, Robert, and Patricia Norvell. *Patricia Norvell in Conversation with Robert Barry*. Eds. Alexander Alberro, and Patricia Norvell. Recording Conceptual Art. Berkeley, Los Angeles, 2001, p 86.

For Barry, ‘nothing’ seems to him the most potent thing in the world⁷⁷, it’s as persuasive as as philosophical idea as much as it is very difficult to achieve. It gets to a limit point of the kind of conceptual art that is beyond of pure idea. But even though the materials of Robert Barry’s interests were used investigated by Cold War intelligence services, such as the experimentation with telepathy, his approach does not seem to be deliberately political. Although the knowledge about energies beyond the sensorial was on the air at those times, when for instance, in 1967 a group of protesters tried to levitate the pentagon⁷⁸.

Nevertheless, the interest here relies in the idea of having a piece in the mind of the audience, from the mind of the artist to the mind of the spectator in this case. It points out something that perhaps obvious, it is viewed here under a new light; it is a new way to define the process of art, the process of aesthetic experience. Part of what happens in that process is what Barry does in this piece, that is, an idea which starts in the mind of the artist is transmitted to the mind of the spectator. In his piece the possibility of that transmission process is the piece, it defines the art activity as something immaterial but potentially full of information and energy. What it makes it different and unique is that the existence of the piece depends almost entirely on the spectator –in his thought actually– a literalization of Duchamp’s dictum that: “The spectator makes the picture”⁷⁹. Robert Barry takes the mental process happening at the level of the spectator as the realization of the piece, whereas Duchamp gives the spectator the responsibility of determining the aesthetic importance of the piece in this process.

The creative act takes another aspect when the spectator experiences the phenomenon of transmutation: through the change from inert matter into a work of art, an actual transubstantiation has taken place, and the role of the

⁷⁷ Lippard, Lucy R. *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*. Praeger, New York, 1973, p. 40.

⁷⁸ <http://www.jofreeman.com/photos/Pentagon67.html>

⁷⁹ Judovitz, Dalia. *Rendez-vous with Marcel Duchamp: Given*. Dada/Surrealism 16. University of Iowa, 1987, p. 187.

spectator is to determine the weight of the work on the
esthetic scale.⁸⁰

This transmutation could be exemplified later in 2002, when Jonathan Monk did his *Translation Piece* which involved Chinese whispers-style translations of the *Telepathic Piece* text, so that the final confused statement is 'in this image the way of expression of reactions of the soul attempts to come close to a work of art'⁸¹.

Another of his appropriations of the *Telepathic Piece* consists in viewers talking about the piece on air via a short-wave radio transistor. This evokes the way the piece could have been appeared in Barry's imagination:

It was a telephone hook-up in New York where Seth Siegelau organized the exhibition. At Simon Fraser University there was some set up in the auditorium or some public meeting place, I don't remember exactly, but I do remember sitting at Siegelau's apartment. Siegelau was there and some of the other artists in the show like Lawrence Weiner, Doug Huebler and Joseph Kosuth. I remember that there was some discussion, there were some questions we could hear via the telephone hook-up and we tried to answer them. I just tried to get my thoughts together about what I was feeling at the time. I tried really to concentrate on what it was and for however long I could do it. That's basically what it was. I don't remember whether anybody got it, although some people said they have caught it. How to send things telepathically? I don't know.⁸²

In any case, by enacting this way of approaching the creative act, *Telepathic Piece* becomes a generative piece, the text invites to be read in different ways obtaining different meanings. That is to say, taking art as a mental process and developing an artwork in which

⁸⁰ Lebel, Robert. *Marcel Duchamp*. Paragraphic Books, New York, 1959, p. 78.

⁸¹ <https://frieze.com/article/jonathan-monk>

⁸² Malasauskas, Raimundas. Interview:

<http://community.livejournal.com/-arthistory/33358.html?page=1>

actually to realize that mental process is the piece proposes a new principle from which new bases can be derived that enable new pieces to be created.

However, and last but not least, it is unavoidable to find resemblance in Alvin Lucier's *Music For Solo Performer* which utilizes brainwaves, amplification and percussion instruments. The later are activated by the alpha waves which are amplified and diffused to various speakers put right up against the percussion. A piece that also has to do with mental activity production, made it in 1965 in collaboration with the physicist Edward Dewan.

Also related to music and coming from the visual art, Robert Filliou has a series of work in 1977 named *Telepathic Music*. They're two different works, one is a sculpture made it with music stands forming a circle, with playing cards on them. The other is a video where the artist appears saying "welcome" and "farewell", the video deconstructs three simultaneous levels, the sound of the words, the gestures of the artist and the image of the video.

Furthermore, Sigmar Polke does a *Telepathische Sitzung (Telepathic Session)* works which have to do with communication via telepathy, with dead artists, a technique used for a piece I will talk later in this thesis.

Smell

Smell is a video directly related to two other pieces on the program, *AXE* and *Air From México*. It is indirectly to the live performance with a professional medium⁸³, who attempts to communicate with Marcel Duchamp to discuss how he gave me the idea for *Air From México*, the last artwork of the concert. In other words, it is an extension of the deodorant spray piece

⁸³ Also developed later.

connecting the smell, poetically and politically, to the collaborative work I make with Marcel Duchamp through the assistance of a medium.

Smell uses the audio from a documentary described earlier in the *AXE* piece, the audio where the North-American man describes the smell of the immigrants. This audio is used as voice-off in the background of the video, in which a glass bottle that is being filled with air is shown, while driving a car through a middle low class neighborhood in México. The glass bottle is being closed at the end, containing air and aroma from México. The video also functions as a documentation of that action.⁸⁴

Having heard a white North-American man complaining about illegals because of their smell, suggested to me the idea of bringing odor from the other side of the border and documenting the action, as a video dialogue through the documentary form. So that, in the video while he speaks kindly about the little inconveniences of illegal immigrants, a Mexican is filling a glass bottle with air –and its odor– from México. The air and its smell, respectfully enclosed, crossed the border and were released as *Air From México*, completing this three part dialogue.

By the way, the action for the video is realized in Aguascalientes, the capital city of the state with the same name, in which a high rate of population loss has place each year. In 2015, according with the National Institute of Statistics and Geography⁸⁵, it was the state with the most people migrating to the US, together with Zacatecas, Guanajuato, Michoacán, Querétaro and Chihuahua, the last of these being the only one that is in the border with the US. It is one of those places in México where some people –especially the ones in extreme poverty

⁸⁴ The video can be watched here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1JObM1467M>

⁸⁵ http://www.inegi.org.mx/saladeprensa/boletines/2016/especiales/especiales2016_01_10.pdf

and the ones who have not had the means to afford a university education– aspire to find a better job in the US, which according to our dear neighbor in the documentary, is a false dream.

Bringing different airs, the visual artist Erinn Springer, documents and collects in the form of an artwork, the subtleties, aromas and airs from various places and moments where she has been through. The smell is actually her inspirational point of departure for this collection about the intangible. Her technique is to carry an opened little glass bottle during her stay in each trip she takes. She attempts to immortalize moments and to keep the essence of space and time in a void-enclosed recipient. A link with the invisible matter of music can be found in the way both, smell and sound, create sense:

[...]but what makes smell special is the relationship we can generate with things from something invisible. The meaning comes from absence. [...] It represents something or someone who was or will be present. The smell illuminates the past, captures the present and tells a story about the future, all at the same time.⁸⁶

It is particularly enlightening the conception of smell as a temporal device, as with sound within a context, it can direct memory backwards and forward even in a long timeline, or in a concert for instance.

It is in this way and less as an artistic souvenir, in which Smell explores subtle associations through the memory, and unfolds direct dialogue with the pieces it is related to, as a temporal event in a concert.

⁸⁶ Carreño, Luis. Interview with Erinn Springer. Creators Vice, México, 2017. https://creators.vice.com/es_mx/article/platicamos-con-la-chica-que-colecciona-aire-de-todo-el-mundo-en-frascos. Translation by Omar Fraire.

For an intensive course about interactive music on the spring of my first year in Wesleyan, I prepared a piece for Chapareke Hidrocálido, live electronics and video⁸⁷. This was another reading of that piece, it was the same score but performed in Viola da Gamba.

Part of the notion of making transcriptions of pieces is to create additional layers of meanings for the concert by changing their physical form, like a quote outside of its context. The Chapareke is a string instrument as is the Viola, but they are very different in technique and history. My can be performed on either or even some other string instruments. What if I took a very European ancient instrument and applied to it a technique developed for another ancient instrument but indigenous to México, in order to Raramurize it from my own personal context? Certainly a strategy that often apply to a traditional instrument is to take it out of its traditional techniques and develop my own approach starting from sound as raw material⁸⁸, but in this case the video made the difference.

The piece develops a series of sound production techniques in relation to real-time granular synthesis. At two different moments of the piece, two videos appear. They are taken from the documentary *Chapareke, la Llave de la Casa de Dios* by Ángel Estrada⁸⁹, where the last two Rarámuris talk about the instrument.

Those videos made the relation Chapareke – Viola da Gamba evident, the first one appears Guadalupe Estrada talking about the Chapareke and the last one shows Antonio Camilo playing it.

⁸⁷ The audio part can be listened here: <https://soundcloud.com/omar-fraire/onoruame>

⁸⁸ A very useful concept that I had been using intuitively but that I took maturely later from my colleague Hugo Morales when I was studying in The Netherlands.

⁸⁹ Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsIFSpzFEBE&feature=youtu.be>, Full documentary can be watched by contacting me or the author.

This new version is called *Ganoko*, is the name of the giants that appear in old Rarámuri tales. Giants appear frequently in several indigenous cultures from México. According to the legends in the Rarámuri culture, The Ganoko were giants created by Onorúame before humans. They were clumsy and used to abuse nature, so they became extinct, but there was a time where these huge beings lived with the Rarámuris in a partnership of mutual support. The Ganoko helped with the cultivation and preparation of the land and the Tarahumara gave them food and tesgüino in return⁹⁰. But the Ganoko were not good and when they got drunk they used to abuse the Tarahumara women and eat their children. The Rarámuris did not support the situation and organized to kill the last Ganoko. They offered the giant poisoned food and he went to die to a cave in the top of the mountain range.

These stories are told by almost all Rarámuris in Chihuahua, anthropologists believe that the ancestral history of the Ganoko was invented by the Rarámuris to justify the bones of dinosaurs or other prehistoric beings that they found in the mountains and the story served to educate the children in the respect to the nature, the care of their people and the fear of these mythological beings⁹¹.

After a research trip to Chihuahua, I was amazed by the anthropomorphous forms of the mountain rocks, you could truly feel their presence as living giants. For me going from Chapareke to Viola da Gamba in the same piece was to take a giant step, this relation could be

⁹⁰ Tesgüino is a fermented drink made year round from sprouted corn. The Rarámuris regard it as sacred, and it forms a significant part of their society.

⁹¹ As mentioned previously, thanks to a summer research stipend that I got from Wesleyan University, I had the opportunity to go to the Copper Canyon to learn about the Chapareke, this information came from the Rarámuris and anthropologists I met there. The realization of a documentary is still in progress and it was presented in my last thesis recital in the fall of 2017.

a very distant one, but on the other hand, the action that inversely, was being applied from the Chapareke to the Viola da Gamba was pretty clear.

World music is present at Wesleyan, it balances the weight that western music culture can exert in an academic music education, other knowledges are set up into a dialogue providing encounters that decentralize the creativity and avoid holding just one position about the ontology of music or its social implications. But only to certain extent. There is always the latent danger of normalizing difference, in the sense that every music has the right to be different but in a very regulated conditions inside a previously defined institution; but this is a never-ending process.

The strategy for making a comment about it, was addressed by taking a piece that was thought for the Chapareke and applying it to an instrument that represented European early music culture. The Viola da Gamba I had access, was a modern one, an instrument made in this time, it was not original from the age, it was in some sense a quote of the original instrument. It was used as a palimpsest, a cultural juxtaposition from my also modern approach to an ancient indigenous instrument; to another with a different context and background.

In México there are also cultural situations in which we can recognize the same process. For instance, in México city, the metropolitan catholic cathedral was built right over an ancient Aztec Temple, Templo Mayor. Archeologic ruins are being discovered all the time across the country⁹², the entire modern city of México is built over the Aztec capital city Tenochtitlán. A similar action was done with indigenous beliefs, Spanish conquerors

⁹² For instance in this year: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-4357532/Ancient-palace-belonged-earliest-states-Mesoamerica.html>

juxtaposed virgin Mary over Aztec goddess Tonatzin. Up to this day, Mexican identity is lived as process of constant construction in a continuous project altered daily.

Fugue I / II

The *Fugues* were part of my composer traditional education I had in México. I studied two years in the University of Colima and left the career unfinished after an earthquake⁹³ almost destroyed the whole Institute of Fine Arts. I continued my studies in University of Guadalajara where the composition approach was rather traditional. We had to compose for years in each style from baroque to impressionism, these two fugues were part of that composition I did in 2003. After 4 years of in University of Guadalajara I decided to desert and embraced a self-taught composition.

The original *Fugues* were made for piano. I decided to make an arrangement for the thesis recital, at the beginning they would be a sort of intermezzos between the other pieces.

The arrangement was for the instruments and friends that were available, Tomek Arnold on the Marimba and Sean Sonderegger on the Baritone Saxophone.

During the rehearsals I realized that the dynamics of power between the musicians were really interesting to me. They had been always there, part of them embedded in the orchestration and in tradition, every instrument had a particular role depending on its organology and the musical texture of each composition; and more remarkably in the personal relations the musicians established between them. In the practice of rehearsal, a mutual interdependency is developed, body language and musical intuition help them to accomplish the piece. It is a gentle struggle and constant negotiation of power.

⁹³ <http://www.cbsnews.com/pictures/mexican-earthquake/>

The aim then, became clear: they were not made to function as intermezzos, instead, the *Fugues* were going to be presented as the accomplishment of this rehearsal practice. As they were the result of it, I had then, to display the rehearsals live, as a different piece, preceding the *Fugues* as the final result. The rehearsal then became a quote of *Politics of Rehearsal*. As I mentioned before, I gave them a new fugue at the moment of the concert just for that purpose. The *Fugues* were present formally as a regular music piece.

I must say that Bach music has been very influential not just for me but for almost any musician studying in México. The traditional education for a musician in my country starts with playing Bach, there is the belief that we must approach all the European western tradition from the beginning, which creates the general fallacy among the students that early music is less complex than modern music, and this kind of mental setting makes difficult the possibility of playing music after the XVIII century. However, Bach music takes an important part of the musical mind and intuition of the music students at my country. I had high respect for the early forms of music, the study of the three instruments I know how to play, started by learning baroque pieces, and the fugue has always been one of the most difficult forms to play. Also as a composer, fugues required a high musicianship and deep knowledge about counterpoint, imitation techniques, harmony and sense of form. Anyway, I have acknowledged that these techniques can be extrapolated to a different thinking, my concert could be seen as a fugue, presenting the same subject in different ways, performing several voices simultaneously. Today I believe, the composition of simultaneous voices has to do more with acoustics and psychoacoustics than with following counterpoint rules, but of course that kind of knowledge was not taught at my bachelor degree.

That is the reason why I choose to perform these *Fugues*. As a dialogue with that past, as a quote of the concert itself, a reference to the way I was using all of the pieces, as

simultaneous voices. And also as an irreverence to that education but with a renovated respect for what these pieces could do in a more extended context, with a broader use.

Breath Breathing in Concert

For this piece I decided to invoke Duchamp from the death and ask him for a piece, as a collaboration for my concert.

The influence of Duchamp in art is undeniable, most of the avant-garde after him can be related to his work or his thoughts. Even in music we can recognize his influence in pieces like *Erratum Musical* where he utilizes chance strategies for choosing the pitches from a piano and writing melodies for him and his sisters to sing.

I'm not entirely aware when his figure appeared in my interest but I do remember I started to study by myself about visual arts. The school where I was then, University of Guadalajara, did not give me the freedom nor the resources to compose through sound as raw material, or even explore extended techniques or electronics. So, I tried to get information from the library, internet and being close to visual arts events. I was looking for ways to know about contemporary music, as it was the term we used to hear around that kind of music that sounded new and exciting for a few of us. The readings I had at hand and my interests, always took me to avant-garde historical information, DADA, Fluxus, Conceptual Art, among of course, a few information about new music, like new complexity, chance music, North-American, French, German electroacoustic music, instrumental concrete music.

But it was at a lecture by Jorge Méndez Blake⁹⁴ around 2003, given in a small classroom, which gave more direction to my interests in conceptual art. The visual art school was adjacent to the music school and I could take some elective classes there. I took Aesthetics,

⁹⁴ <http://www.mendezblake.com/>

Music Sociology and Analysis of the National Reality⁹⁵. One day a lecture was announced, it was about the use of texts in art, the artist was announced as one of the recipients of an important state fellowship⁹⁶, in fact the lecture was about the work he was making for that fellowship. I thought it would be relevant to know what kind of artists had that support, and also what kind of new art professional artists were doing at that time.

As the work by Méndez Blake has to do with language, text and specifically with books, he has some links with conceptual art tradition. The conference started by talking about those influences. Those were the first moments where I got clear ideas about Ready-Mades, about Duchamp and about the North American conceptual art from the 60's and 70's.

Since then Marcel Duchamp has been a figure in my creative imagination, so that I decided to invite him to collaborate with me and to come to my concert. Of course, the only way to do so was to bring a psychic to the stage.

The act of having a piece from the afterlife is not a completely extraneous idea at all. If we notice that the musical practice does that all the time when we play music from dead authors. It is the same basic principle, we bring back to life an idea from an author and "his" presence becomes real. My intention was to try to speak with Duchamp and ask him if I could say that my last piece for the concert *Air From México*, could be a collaboration with him.

It was about dealing with the different forces that exist in this universe. For me, the historical presence of Duchamp, his work, his influence and the way we understand art, was truly a present energy in our artistic imagination. We are invoking him all the time when we relate the art we perceive, with his work. He is still around.

⁹⁵ A seminar that consisted in Mexican history readings and their connection with the present conditions in México.

⁹⁶ <http://fonca.cultura.gob.mx/programa/jovenes-creadores/>

It is also what we used to do with quotation, we take the words from an author and we make them speak. Having him here was making him speak, like a live quotation. A resonant tomb.

Breath Breathing in Concert, is an action that acts as an extended quote of Duchamp's creative act lecture. In it, by the seeking Duchamp, the psychic would be actually doing the piece for my concert, performing obliquely as an artist according with Duchamp:

To all appearances, the artist acts like a mediumistic being who, from the labyrinth beyond time and space, seeks his way out to a clearing. If we give the attributes of a medium to the artist, we must then deny him the state of consciousness on the esthetic plane about what he is doing or why he is doing it.⁹⁷

The extrasensory activity of *Breath Breathing in Concert*, takes place in the mind of the psychic, it materializes in speech and forms an idea in the mind of the audience. It is conformed from a mental matter, the imagination in my mind that gave birth to the idea. The performance could be perceived by seeing and hearing, but the understanding and the process of taking part of the ritual is entirely mental. It is in that exercise where the piece actually happens. Duchamp pursued a related notion of non-retinal art in which, the piece is beyond what we just see, an art in the service of the mind.

Since Courbet, it's been believed that painting is addressed to the retina. That was everyone's error. The retinal shudder! Before, painting had other functions: it could be religious, philosophical, moral. If I had the chance to take an antiretinal[sic] attitude, it unfortunately hasn't changed much; our whole century is completely retinal, except for the Surrealists, who tried to go outside it somewhat. And still, they didn't go so far!⁹⁸

⁹⁷ *Op. Cit.* Lebel, Robert. p. 78.

⁹⁸ Cabanne, Pierre. *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, trans. Ron Padget. Viking. New York, 1971, p. 43.

And later he develops the idea for his well-known Ready-Mades:

Ultimately, it should not be looked at... It's not the visual aspect of the Readymade that matters, it's simply the fact that it exists.... Visuality is no longer a question: The Readymade is no longer visible, so to speak. It is completely gray matter. It is no longer retinal.⁹⁹

Sound is non-retinal in nature, so from an interdisciplinary point of view, this non-retinal piece could fit in a context of a concert, where the elements are timed, happening in a timeline in which the events are able to be perceived structurally as a continuum, like a stream of thought, definitely otherwise than an object we could see almost entirely at one glance.

But the closest relation was that I was trying to work with materials that were non visual or even apparently non-existent. In this sense, artists and psychics are mediums who work with energies beyond the eye.

The existent psychics around Middletown Connecticut were surprisingly many. Just by searching in internet I found fourteen psychics whose activities were varied. After talking with almost all of them, trying to get someone for the concert and getting no success, I got the phone number for Diane Hiller¹⁰⁰, the psychic that helped me to contact Marcel Duchamp.

Matt Wellins, my wife Lucero Alonso and I, went to her office after arranging a fast meeting, the concert was approaching. I was late and she was clearly upset, saying probably Duchamp wouldn't show up owing the energies we were having at that moment. After apologizing we started the session, but not before she stroked her Tibetan singing bowl with the intention of cleaning any bad vibe that might remain still there.

⁹⁹ Collin, Phillipe. Interview 1967. *Marcel Duchamp Talking about Readymades*. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2002, p. 37.

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.elementalempowerments.com/mediumship.htm>

Sound decaying, we began to talk about how the performance would be and what I needed from Duchamp. Marcel began to speak to her. I was taking notes and asking a lot of questions. The piece started there, without audience, some days before the thesis recital.

Diane Hiller is the kind of medium who does the type of mediumship known as Trance, which is a form of mental mediumship where the psychic remains conscious whereas the spirits use her mind to communicate. According to her, it is a form of telepathy. But this particular definition of trance mediumship, might deploy further relations with my concert:

Trance phenomena result from the behavior of intense focusing of attention, which is the key psychological mechanism of trance induction. Adaptive responses, including institutionalized forms of trance, are 'tuned' into neural networks in the brain.¹⁰¹

I had some question prepared in my mind for that moment, but I preferred to discard them in order to leave the piece to take its own course. This entrancement requires that the medium allows the ego to step aside; only then can the communication to be achieved, so that the the message could be delivered without any influence from the psychic. Somehow in my decision I was also doing that, without being aware.

I was rehearsing to bring the quotation about the artist as a medium, to the reality of a performance. I am truly aware that there are other dimensions in the world, energies of very different kinds that operate through different levels. Just by taking the body of a psychic for instance, we could acknowledge that not only the energetic process is happening through her, but also a series of thoughts, feelings and sensations, driven by his will and by the external petition of contacting Duchamp, sculpted by a whole system of culture and history, of geography and time. These energies, these kind of forces operate in every human, in every

¹⁰¹ Castillo, Richard. "Culture, Trance, and the Mind-Brain," *Anthropology of Consciousness*. Volume 6, Issue 1, 1995, p. 17.

event, entangled in the complexity of their inner and outer relations. The concert as a sculpture of these systems, brings this movement where the piece, as affective information, crosses from a place where it did not exist to a place where it becomes alive. I do know that the kind of influence one artist can leave in the world could act as a system of energy, manifested in forces of all kind, as a belief, as social glue or even as an institution or cultural path.

As an immigrant, Duchamp was again coming from one world to another, giving me the permission to say *Air From México*, was a collaboration. In an environment where everything has the potentiality of becoming an artwork, where those forces can be recognized, balanced, composed and addressed as possibilities it is difficult not to discern what is *not* a collaboration.

Breath Breathing in Concert was the name which Duchamp suggested through Diane Hiller for the performance. It was related with the last piece in the thesis recital, *Air From México*.

Inverted Obelisk

Inverted Obelisk is based on a piece by Hiram Navarrete named *Mazunte*. It is a piece for solo Clarinet, although it has another version for flute, named *Nexpa*, from the same year (2006).

Mazunte was composed in Wesleyan while Hiram Navarrete was doing his Masters with Alvin Lucier. It was made for a series of concerts curated by the COW (Composers of Wesleyan) a group led by Ron Kuivila and devoted to perform experimental music and new music by the composers at the university. They made three concerts with three curatorial ideas: Process, Contingency and Image. *Mazunte* was written under the idea of process. Hiram recognized process as was one of the most important ideas that could be related to experimental music.

The piece takes the form a text score:

A slow exploration of all the register of the instrument through a *glissando*.

Performance should last between twelve and fifteen minutes.

Register should be divided into blocks of different length and duration.

Wait in silence between each block-fifteen to thirty-five seconds approximately.

Attack and decay should last around fifteen to twenty seconds.

Add presence of air and modulate it when possible.

Play as soft as possible throughout.¹⁰²

Mazunte was about the slow process of changing the timbre of the instrument.

I thought that by using a glissando I could bring out the changes in the acoustic of the instrument. Even the smallest details can change significantly the instrument's timbre. Even the quality of the reed –depending on how hard or soft it is– can affect how the instrument beaves and resonates.¹⁰³

Mazunte is a virgin beach in the coast of Oaxaca, México. It is known because of the National Mexican Turtle Center where they take care of sea turtles around the area. Mazunte derives from the nahuatl “maxotetia” which means “please put your eggs here” and also, is the name of a variety of crab¹⁰⁴.

Back in the late 90's, the beach was one of the places visited by surfers and very popular among hippies because of its tolerance in the use of marijuana.

Inverted Obelisk has also another connotation.

¹⁰² The score was proportioned by the author.

¹⁰³ Navarrete, Hiram. *Collected “Writings and Compositions”* (M.A. Thesis, Wesleyan University, 2007), pp. 39 – 40.

¹⁰⁴ Blog of the State of Oaxaca. [«Mexico Oaxaca costas de Mazunte. Ecoturismo. Entre en contacto con las tortugas en el Centro Mexicano de la tortuga.»](#) [Mexico Oaxaca Coasts of Mazunte. Ecotourism. Contact among the turtles of the Mexican Center of Turtles.]

Happily, inverting an obelisk was already done in art. Barnett Newman's piece *Broken Obelisk*, came to my mind as the first reference, but at the same moment *Portable Broken Obelisk (for outdoor markets)* from 1991, by the Mexican visual artist Eduardo Abaroa, became more important. The latter is a reproduction, in dimensions and composition, of the earlier. *Inverted Obelisk* is also a quotation from Abaroa's.

Portable Broken Obelisk (for outdoor markets) was reinterpretation of Newman's, with a radical change, instead of steel he used a mobile structure coated with pink plastic. The obelisk, no longer made of stone is changed in meaning. In addition, it must be installed as intervention, in street markets where the informal commerce is all around (*tianguis* in México), its structure is very much alike the tents are used in these kind of markets in México, more changes in the meaning, the piece become nomad, as the outdoor markets. The sublime was being ridiculed.

The obelisk is very present in the historical imaginary of the North-American Culture, one of the most important obelisks is located at the Washington's monument at Washington D.C. Newman's obelisk was bought by the art collectors Dominique and John de Menil, they wanted to dedicate the sculpture to Martin Luther King¹⁰⁵, who gave his famous "I have a dream..." speech at the Lincoln Memorial in the same city of Washington D.C.

Abaroa's piece has also its own political context, from its materiality, from its possibility of being moved, its color (rosa mexicano) and its structure alike Mexican street market tents; it is already speaking about the local reality of México city. But beyond making reference to the work at the market and the *tianguis* as places for economic transaction –with a strong historical pre-Hispanic reference–, it refers to the market as a place where one can find all kinds of things and where an interchange of meanings is given among a combination of

¹⁰⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broken_Obelisk

illegality. It is a very intense current reality in México. It belongs to a way of contemporary exchange, a way of living. He himself speaks about its work as a “pirate modern sculpture”, a notion very related politically with the use of quotes I was working with in my concert.

Governments, parties, gods, companies and their logos, pop idols, artists and several other examples exist to multiply. A lie is repeated several times to become truth. The owners of the economic world have managed to multiply their products, their methods, their logos to cover the land. Today in Mexico, the news often denounces the “Chinese” versions of the traditionally worshiped saints. To produce is not the most important, but to establish a hierarchy that allows to differentiate the multiple aspects of the world and give meaning to a myth about another, to one idea about the other, to one product over another. The issue is to create a parasite that afflicts the most people. An external infection. Once established with some infectious hierarchy by means of multiplication, one must defend oneself from multiplication itself. As a producer you have to control and as a consumer you have to recognize the “true” message, the “authentic” feeling, the “brand” product. Legal production, Illegal piracy ... in both cases a hierarchy is defended that keeps the elitist control of the cultural becoming intact. There are still few who have the means of production, including cultural production, although almost anyone can multiply almost anything. Can piracy really destroy cultural oligopolies?¹⁰⁶

Air From México

Air From México is inspired in the piece by Duchamp named *50 cc of Paris Air*, it is a piece from 1919 that belongs the category of Ready-Made. It is a souvenir gift he made to his friend and sponsor Walter Arensberg.

A Ready-Made is an object taken out of its context and declared it as a work of art by the mere act of choosing it, as he states in relation with the infamous *Fontaine*.

¹⁰⁶ Montero, Daniel. *El Cubo de Rubik: Arte mexicano en los años 90*. Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo, México, 2013, p.26. Translation by Omar Fraire.

Whether Mr. Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under a new title and point of view – created a new thought for that object.¹⁰⁷

It was an act of the anti-retinal art he was pursuing, channeling the attention to “more verbal regions”.

I want very much to establish is that the choice of these “readymades” was never dictated by esthetic delectation. This choice was based on a reaction of visual indifference with at the same time a total absence of good or bad taste – in fact a complete anesthesia.

One important characteristic was the short sentence which I occasionally inscribed on the “readymade.” That sentence instead of describing the object like a title was meant to carry the mind of the spectator towards other regions more verbal.¹⁰⁸

The interest by Duchamp for this verbal regions can be traced to Roussel’s *Impression d’Afrique* where its linguistic deconstructions coincides with its narrative of geographical dislocation.

It was fundamentally Roussel who was responsible for my glass, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*. From his *Impression d’Afrique* I got the general approach. This play of his I saw with Apollinaire helped me greatly on one side of my expression. I saw once I could use Roussel as an influence. I felt that as a painter it was much better to be influenced by a writer than by another painter. And Roussel showed me the way.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Anonymous article in *The Blind Man* # 2, May 1917. (Written by Beatrice Wood, H.P. Roché and/or Marcel Duchamp.) found here: <http://radicalart.info/things/readymade/duchamp/text.html>

¹⁰⁸ Lecture at the Museum of Modern Art, Art and Artists. New York, October 19, 1961. Also found here: <http://radicalart.info/things/readymade/duchamp/text.html>

¹⁰⁹ Snouillet, Michael & Peterson, Elmer. Ed. *The essential writings of Marcel Duchamp*. James and Hudson, London, 1973, p. 126.

It is also important to point out that, when he wrote for the first time about the Ready-Made, he did it anonymously; for example, *Fontaine* was signed by him as “R. Mutt”. These particular relations he had with text and its possibilities, let us see the social potentiality of language as a device for art¹¹⁰. Duchamp getting himself out of the scene by the written act of signing as other person. Then, Duchamp writing about the piece anonymously in a magazine where he was part of. Finally changing the status of art by declaring an indifferent object as a piece of art. That is to say, taking something done by others and using it in a different context.

Many of his Ready-Mades are labeled or accompanied by a sentence, sometimes with no apparent sense, that works together with the object and its contexts to twist the mental grasp of the piece. The interpretation of these pieces requires one to go beyond the object on a path suggested by the poetic use of language.

50 cc of Paris Air is a glass phial filled with Paris air. It was first a container of serum, which Duchamp brought from a pharmacy and asked to the pharmacist to empty the ampoule and then seal it again once air replaced its original contents. Then he added a label with the sentence “Serum Physiologique” which means physiological serum. Transmuting through text processes, the air into serum for the functions of the body.

Besides its sexual interpretations and its relation with the concept of measurement the piece has had¹¹¹, the nationality of its contained air allows a different understanding. Duchamp emigrated to the United States in 1915, a year after the start of World War I, Walter Arensberg was in the US, so that the souvenir was made to travel from Paris to US, like Duchamp traveled

¹¹¹ http://www.toutfait.com/unmaking_the_museum/Paris%20Air.html

before. The ampule emigrated in 1920, and was broken and replaced in 1949. The air from Paris had crossed the border and was released in the US by accident.

In *Air From México* the air was released on purpose, the piece was made in order to enable an undocumented border crossing by Mexican air which could then be released in the US, impossible to recover. I asked my wife, who was coming from México, to bring me a glass bottle of air. She documented the action and the video of her collection served as the visual component of *Smell*, as already stated before. This jar was the piece I asked Duchamp, through the psychic, to sign in collaboration with me. The glass was broken at the end of the concert.

During the process of making the piece, I had the intention of having real air from Paris, I asked a friend and we made talk about it. The idea then was to ask Duchamp if I could break the glass and release the air, but besides the delivering was too expensive, releasing the Mexican air in US had more powerful connotations.

The lack of uniqueness the Ready-Mades have was one of the triggering points of history for the dematerialization of art, and conversely, the possibility of their industrial replication. The market economy of this late stage of capitalism we have now, has allowed that even air –considered regularly as nothing– can actually be acquired canned from several countries in the world, for a relatively cheap price¹¹². A commercial version of the air collection piece *Vicarious Vials* by the already mentioned artist, Erinn Springer.

Thinking in what makes air to be from one country or another, we can acknowledge it as a vital element for life, it is what we breath to keep us alive. Air from México is breathed from the people living in México, bringing air from there, is bringing a vital part of Mexicans in this case. It is the last breath of Mexicans before crossing the border.

¹¹² <https://www.etsy.com/listing/88816889/original-canned-air-from-paris-gag>

The Mexican artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer makes a piece with this poetic, although detached from the immigration politics, it questions the boundaries of life and death, and technology and life. *Last Breath* from 2012 consists in a device that keeps breath moving from robotic bellows and a brown paper bag. It is designed to store the breath of a person¹¹³.

Composed meaning generators as a concert system

Those were the pieces that were chosen to use at the thesis recital, they will be deployed here in the context of concert time, exposed in their inner relations and they will show how and why they were select to be used and how they worked on the program.

Just a previous note on the program notes. In the latter, a mini protest homage was included. Forty-three one dollar bills partially burned with a written legend on it “to be radical is a privilege” alluding the difficulties of radicalize your artwork in a very permissive University like Wesleyan where almost no opposition is confronted. Might be a problem but in fact it’s a privilege, but what if this privilege is the actual problem?

The number of bills is related to the last massacre the government did to the Mexican students at that time, the Ayotzinapa Massacre¹¹⁴.

Star Networks at Onorúame’s Voice

My encounter with the piece *Star Networks At The Singing Point* was relatively unexpected. Back in my country, the education at that moment, at my early study of music and specifically in the city where I was born, experimental music was not very popular around most of my young classmates, nor with my professors. I had to research myself about nontraditional music,

¹¹³ http://www.lozano-hemmer.com/last_breath.php

¹¹⁴ As a case almost forgotten by the authorities, this is the last news:
http://elpais.com/elpais/2016/12/19/inenglish/1482155255_849997.html

and I remember knowing about the music by John Cage separately from the one by David Tudor. The internet of the 90's was not anything compared to what we have now, while through *SoulSeek*¹¹⁵ you could find music by these two composers, the most common works where the ones you could find easily, and in that situation, having no other information on what you listen to but the sound, I founded more interesting Tudor's *Pulsers* than Cage's *Imaginary Landscape No. 1*. At that point I didn't know they were related.

After a symposium at Wesleyan University I realized even more that they were very much closer than I realized. It was this same symposium that gave me entrance to a world I had been waiting to approach closer.

That encounter with Tudor's music had changed my expectations in listening music. Tudor's work had always been for me a point where invention and composition are entangled in a very captivating way, building his own electronics for music made me think about the direction of my creative efforts.

I tend to think myself as an inventor, an inventor inside art, inside sound. For instance, I always start my biography with an anecdote describing what I used to do as a child; destroy toys to create robots. Although, one of the main reasons was for taking a closer look into the circuitry inside. I did want to invent functional electronic devices, but I just didn't know where to start. Wesleyan gave me that starting point, and perhaps without me fully realizing it, I was working as an inventor, in a very close historical relation to the position Tudor took in the creation of cooperative *Composers inside electronics*. Coincidentally, this visual appreciation of the circuitry was also present in the *Star Networks*' conception, and is an important part of the performance:

¹¹⁵ Is a peer-to-peer file sharing network application. <http://www.slsknet.org/news/>

The components should be visible, and that is because a part of the theater of the piece is the look of the components.

I think the appearance of the components themselves is seductive, and can engage the observer, leading them into an examination of what I'm doing. [...] I just like the way they look, and I don't see much reason to hide them.

It was [Tudor] who suggested that the components really be visible, and it was brilliant, it was just what the piece needed.¹¹⁶

In March of 2016, Wesleyan hosted a Symposium about Tudor's work¹¹⁷, one of the activities was a workshop with Ralph Jones about *Star Networks*. As I was taking an intensive course given by Ron Kuivila (MUSC222), the class took part of the workshop very attentively. I soon discovered a natural fascination in assembling circuitry and getting sonic results even without having a professional background or deep knowledge about electronics.

In the workshops, Ralph barely described the piece at the beginning, but through the practice, we started to understand the process more and more. John Driscoll was workshoping his *Speaking In Tongues* instrument-piece and Michael Johnsen was also around, helping us to discover and figure out *Star Networks*, fascinating people. For me, the idea of getting this level of invention and the possibility of getting that rich sound from simple elements, was totally empowering. I also realized that tuning the singing point was a very enjoyable task, and that I could spend hours hearing those sounds.

Consequently, I had the honor to perform the piece at the World Music Hall in Wesleyan in one of the concerts of the Symposium and later in New York¹¹⁸, both sharing the stage with Ralph Jones, and as being part of the *Composer Inside Electronics* group.

¹¹⁶ *Op. Cit.*, Minkowsky, pp 6, 10 and 13.

¹¹⁷ Over, Under, Around, And Through The Music Of David Tudor. March 24 to 26, 2016. <http://www.wesleyan.edu/cfa/archives/over-under-around-and-through-the-music-of-david-tudor-archive.html>

¹¹⁸ <http://avant.org/event/circuit-scores/>

This experience made me realize how the use of basic circuitry for sound could enable independence in creation, and how it could allow me to get close very pragmatically, to work with energy as raw material, a very fulfilling approach I barely intuited from Tudor's music. After the concerts I kept doing the piece and developing an appreciation for it.

I decided then, to begin the fall thesis recital with an interpretation of *Star Networks*. Its multiplicity both in sound texture and in its conceptual structure would give to the concert the perfect metaphoric description and departure point.

The event was disposed to have a variety of pieces, some overlapped and some establishing formal relations through time. Therefore, several layers of readings and meanings would arise as the result from the initial stream of energy that *SN* represented. Also, at that time, the piece seemed to be the most distinct from the group, and because of its duration, it had more sense to start with it, even before the audience arrived. In this sense, an unclear beginning would give me the right amount of uncertainty to operate from a situation where the attention could be more awake.

Star Networks would be the first piece to be confronted with, and due to its visual element, other relations could be explored: On one hand, I had come to Wesleyan and learned circuitry from *SN*, and on the other, I had this project involving an ancient indigenous instrument.¹¹⁹ Both originally built, both dealing differently with balance of energies, and at the same time, both could be seen as two extreme ways of approaching sound. They were clearly two forces in which my concert could be articulated.

The Chapareke Rarámuri used to be near the *SN*' cables and components around my studio but their closeness was yet richer in certain functional purposes. While the *singing point* has to do with an organizing technique or principle which allows the instrument to juggle

¹¹⁹ The Chapareke Rarámuri and the Hidrocálido, discussed before.

between stability and disorder; the Chapareke is a device which allows to take care of the balances of the world. In *Star Networks* the equilibrium sings. With the Chapareke you open the house of god to achieve this equilibrium.

I decided to combine the two instruments and retitled the piece as *Star Networks at Onorúame's voice*.

Thus, by performing *SN*, I quote an aspect of it as a reference to the structural behavior of the event, i.e. the different semiotic paths the latter could take. On the top of that, I add the Chapareke Rarámuli as an extreme exposition of the juxtaposed relations the event would deploy.

The Chapareke Rarámuri was incorporated in the feedback loop as a component. One or more alligator clips could be attached to the strings and be connected in the network complexes at the breadboards. Although the sound behavior just turned a little bit more unexpected, the sculptural result had a clear definition on the concert intentions.

Last but not least, the output signal of *SN* was used for to alter the video of *Victor Huerta*, when it appeared. This relation will be explored further in the next pages.

Politics of Rehearsal

One of the first things that called my attention in this piece by Francis Alÿs, was its multiple levels in which the idea of rehearsal was organized. The juxtaposition of different qualities of time, the musical autonomous time fragmented by the rehearsal temporality, and on the top of that, Cuauhtémoc with his own time, talking about historic-political implications of a rehearsal.

However, the use of a previously prepared sound material as an organizational presence, was even more inspiring and useful for the whole of my concert. How the rehearsing of music could become the timeline for other actions, the extended relation of the music to its

external practices, was for me a wide perspective on sound, on its interactions. And of course the surrounding air of resistance through all the work by Alÿs was a trigger for my own work.

For my concert, I used the title as a quote and I took the notion of rehearsal as the aim of the piece I was composing. What I did was a rehearsal of an older piece I had, a fugue composed in baroque style (*Fugue III*). I gave the score to the performers minutes before the beginning so that they could really rehearse at the very moment of the concert, on stage, as the piece. The idea came to me when we were rehearsing Fugue I, which indeed I wanted to present. The simple rehearsal was becoming more interesting under the perspective of quotation synergies.

It wasn't exactly the piece by Francis, but the relations were there.

I wanted to expose live the preparation of a piece of my own and, in this case, I highlighted the politic layer, that was relocated by me to expose those social forces that were constituting both pieces. The human interactions needed to determine what and who was wrong in fully determined musical passages, and how these behavioral forces act as attractors in a system where the aim is to get a piece done expose subtle power negotiations inherent in collective action.

The piece was made for piano, a three-part fugue, so the performers were confronted with a score with three voices each one. I had two musicians, one on the Baritone Saxophone and the other on Marimba. Although the Marimba can play more than three voices at the same time, no orchestration was provided and because of the distance between fingers and keys on the Piano and the big resonant bars on the Marimba, a Piano score does not work well for Marimba without a proper arrangement of the registers.

They were encountering a score almost impossible to play. This with the purpose of exposing a variation of that notion of a modernity that can never be reached.

The strategy of quoting, was applied here as a purely personal and contextual interpretation of the title. Inserting the semiotic charge of a quote in a personal context to depart from there to a different construction of meaning, an articulation of politics, a synergy of meanings.

Politics of Rehearsal was performed twice in the concert, first near to the beginning and around the middle. Before the end, another two different fugues by me were played by the same performers in ordinary manner, *Fugues I & II*. They were different pieces than *Politics of Rehearsal* but they were also fugues in baroque style. Two two-part fugues, this time very well-rehearsed and accurately performed.

A long term linear dialogue was being established between these three moments. While the twice presented *Politics of Rehearsal* was about the rehearsal as modernity and about energy in social dynamics exposed by the task of playing a fugue impossible to realize; *Fugues I & II* were presented very uncontaminated, without any disruption to the interpretative process to show a more complex process of realization, the façade of modernity if you will.

In the first presentation, the piece started while *Star Networks* was still sounding, and at the same moment a scrambled *Victor Huerta* video started too, so three pieces were being overlapped. But *Politics of Rehearsal* and *Star Networks* stopped a moment after the altered audio of *Victor Huerta* faded in. *SN* bifurcated into the silenced *Politics* piece and into a scrambled *Victor Huerta* video without sound. As the altered fugue and the energetic singing

points left the acoustic space, a disrupted audio fading into its equally scrambled video was exposed. The structural transfiguration of this previous stage of the fugue, towards its silenced rehearsal, opens a fissure where another transfiguration occurs, the *Victor Huerta* video was being altered by the *SN* output signal, and when *SN* ended, the voice of Victor Huerta started to fade in, altered also, joining to this thread of structural transformations.

The second time *Politics of Rehearsal* is presented, it appears after two performance pieces and at the end of a realization of Neuhaus' *Time Piece Beacon*. This second apparition will be discussed later in order to relate it other pieces in the program. Yet, I might say here that, since the piece itself was a rehearsal, it gave me the coherent possibility to both repeat it and to modify its meaning. In addition, as a piece instrumental music, I could distribute it in time to maintain an equilibrium among the different media I had in the concert. Where to collocate them was determined by their semiotic interaction with surrounding pieces.

Victor Huerta

I had the opportunity of watching this video in a residency at the Mexican Centre for Music and Sound Arts at Michoacán, in México. It was stunning. Without any other reference I was confronted with what seemed to be a very strange language, between indigenous and English, almost a chant and over it, the subtitles of it, very subversive ones. I started to think that a revolution was going on somewhere in an unknown place hidden in México, different from the existing struggle developed in Chiapas with the EZLN, among several others. This strange character was inviting me to do things that I had already thought of doing, and of course not only I. But the most intriguing thing was the sound of the language, was it a real language? Is

the guy improvising? Did he invent that language because of his dissidence? Or as a way to communicate safely?

Victor, Cristian and I are about the same age, Cristian's work approaches life in a way that I tend to pursue with mine. I imagine a work that modifies in some extent the sociality of our thought, whereas Cristian, displaces his practice from a purely visual artist to a sort of a manager, generating devices for the social estimation of marginal groups. Quoting his video had a precise political impact in my concert.

Besides the affinity I felt with Cristian's work, I found his use of those texts, a very powerful form of appropriation, the artistic license of modifying pieces of historical importance was very appealing for me, that was the attitude I was looking for in using an expanded conception of quotation.

I had already presented Cristian's *Victor Huerta* in a festival I was realizing back in México, so the piece was still in the back of my mind and I had the feeling that I wanted to work with it, the piece had still more to give from my own perspective, so I decided to use it as material for a new iteration.

It was then a natural approach for me to think of taking the idea to extreme consequences; the language in *Victor Huerta* was already transformed, but I still started to disrupt it more, the video and the audio. Therefore, I took the liberty of using the output audio signal to modify the video. In this way, I had *SN* modifying uncontrollably the video, a simple gesture that would expose the influence of one kind of energy on another.

As the whole concert was conceived as a long piece and since the pieces were functioning as elements in dialogue, their relationships needed to be very well structured and thought through. It made sense to me that, *SN* and the connected Chapareke were the initial

stream of energy, and that at the end they would leave enough entropy to open a space for building a new language. *Victor Huerta* was that new language.

Consequently, it had to start in as something that was beginning to gestate, to born. A very fragmented video without audio at the beginning, followed by the apparition of its very modified audio, and ending with the original audio and video.

Here the layering process starts. The *Víctor* video begins overlapped with *Politics of Rehearsal*, its acoustically produced sound covered a bit by *SN* that continued to play. While the rehearsal was dealing –among other things– with the impossibility to build a fugue, *Víctor* was building a language. Different energies were in the process of organizing their power relations.

When *Víctor Huerta* appears in its unaltered original version, the focus lays on the political message of the subtitles. Nothing more is sounding at the same time. A performer enters the stage just before the video plays in its original version, it was just a human presence that was generating expectancy. *SN* and *Politics* were done and after all the visual and sound information settled down a bit, the attention was directed to the message of *Víctor*, with a tension of the present body on the stage, immobile. Preparing for the end of *Víctor Huerta* for beginning with the performance of *AXE*.

AXE

Using the deodorant body spray was an action that was conceived as a response to one of the parts of the documentary mentioned earlier in this thesis, in which an American man talks about the smell of illegal immigrants passing by near his house. One of the solutions to realize the piece was that I could perform the action at the same moment of the projection of the video; but the piece suggests a very clear link *Air From México* which I was imagining at that time.

At that moment, I was putting together a recital and I had lots of ideas around. These ideas started to mix together and come into dialogue in my process. This was one of the pieces that took me to elaborate a more complex development of the concert, as I started to understand them as being in a contrapuntal relationship.

For instance, I realized that I could make a video with just the audio of that man talking about smell, while the image could show a different thing than the documentary, as a counterpoint.¹²⁰ However, the performance itself was about using a bottle of AXE until it was empty, invading the space with odor. The sonic material I had on the other hand, was at the moment just a simple addition that sounded like white noise. Then I thought that the video could come later on, providing a reflection on the *AXE* piece after the video was watched. This would give me an accurate enactment of what I was trying to show, multiple ideas and relations in various directions, in various levels. I decided then, to give this performance the possibility of having an intense focus. Being a piece which would elaborate intricate associations later on the concert, it deserved its own space for attention.

The *AXE* performance starts right after *Víctor Huerta* ends, utilizing the words by our dear neighbor as a hyperbolic trigger. The performer, who in this case was my wife, recently arrived from México, would enter to the stage during the *Víctor Huerta* video, she would come in with a Chapareke in one hand and with a can of AXE body spray in the other. When Víctor Huerta stopped talking, the performer, back to the audience, would start to spray all of her body, until the bottle is empty.

¹²⁰ The video which ended up being a piece called Smell. It can be watched here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1JObM1467M>

As I said, this piece is directly related with another two in the concert, they were built in a way that they could establish a dialogue in linear time, but also, each of this one has their own value as a complex unit that can generate meanings in relation with other pieces, in different terms even. For instance, after the clear social message from *Víctor Huerta*, *AXE* would be read also through that social notion in mind, but after the piece is ended, a sound art piece is crossfaded, a piece which utilizes white noise as material, then in this case, the relation turns a sonic relation one, not a social relation but a listening one.

The *AXE* piece has this sound dimension too, the sound of the spray bottle being used, it keeps its presence first through smell and then through its sound extension and its crossfading into Neuhaus' *Time Piece*.

So, it makes first a sonic dialogue by concatenation with Neuhaus' *Time Piece*, then with the *Smell* video –where the American talks about smell– and finally with the *Air from México*. All pieces presented after *AXE*. As with the process already started by the juxtaposition of *SN* and *Politics of Rehearsal*, a dialogue was happening below the surface of what was being presented.

Yet, another layer of meaning was added to this performance. Dush, the performer, besides having just crossed –legally– the border, was holding a Chapareke in her hand, a Rarámuri one that I had exchanged for an Hidrocálido, also brought from Chihuahua, a state on the México-US border. The Chapareke is the key of God's house, it is a power device for opening doors, doors *different* from the ones we can see.

Just its presence triggers in my imagination the role of magic always present in the context of Mexican culture. It was already presented in my version of *SN* but here, given the conditions of darkness and the silence being disrupted by the gentle white noise of the spray, the performance was embodied by the mysticism of the unknown, given the fact that it had apparently nothing to do with the previous pieces.

The Chapareke might have provided a key, probably not for the ultimate meaning of this particular piece but as a metaphor for the entire concert unfolding, in time and in its multiple readings. Furthermore, I started to perform *Telepathic Piece* by Robert Morris, before the ending of *AXE* and while *Time Piece* by Neuhaus was starting to fade in. So I was sitting there in silence, eyes closed, doing telepathy, a kind of transcription of both *Music for Solo Performer* and 4'33''.

At the moment the whole situation became to me a ritual. I had not realized how mystical thought was so inherent in my culture until I had the opportunity to live outside it. Musical performance is quite ritualistic, the attention is focused, the stage is a microscope, time bends. There is no doubt that forces beyond our understanding are acting there, in multiple layers. I wanted to work with those forces that I find everywhere. The use of Chapareke falls in the category of these forces, a key that would allow me to deal with the politics of what is contained in a performance. In part talking about these forces in the sense of what Beuys says:

[...] sometimes I tried to express things with the image of a Shaman. We have a materialistic conception, a scientific thought which states that what a Shaman sustains does not exist. Meanwhile a person that knows pretty well this scientific concept [...] comes and repeats what the Shaman had done: that other dimensions exist in life, that other very different forces in the world exist, and that at present human beings are systematically isolated from these forces

by political systems, and I wanted to demonstrate that.¹²¹

Time Piece Beacon

Max Neuhaus' piece was present in my self-education about the arts, it appeared as a discovery about the use of sound outside music. Although I have never heard it live or at the museum, I did recognize this "moment" he was trying to produce, this loud silence after the sudden end of another loud sound that we had forgotten was there and, with this, revealing the presence of other yet more unnoticed sounds.

This idea of uncovering previous layers was very useful for me in making my concert work, it connected things together: when the sound of the body spray ended, *Time Piece Beacon* had already started, it was perceived as an extension of *AXE*, as if *AXE* had left a decay in the memory of the concert, making a lot of sense when the *SMELL* video appeared, just after the second staging of the piece. The piece was played twice, it was connecting *AXE* and *Smell*, the first by sound and the second by allusion, i.e. bringing back to attention the smell of the spray which had never departed even though its presence had receded. This transposed Neuhaus' strategy of bringing to the foreground something that was on the background to a different sense.

In that sense it was not very different to the original version. The first time it was presented, its ending gave entrance to the second performance of *Politics of Rehearsal*. This first appearing of *Politics...* was superimposed on *SN*, so you almost could not hear the

¹²¹ Werner Krüger. Joseph Beuys – *Jeder Mensch ist ein Künstler*. West Germany, 1980. Documentary at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vBGLQd1dTs>, translation by Omar Fraire.

performance at all but you could see that something was happening. But then, the second time *Politics...* was played, it was revealed by the first *Time Piece Beacon* ending, *Politics...* appeared as an unrecognized layer that previously occluded and now revealed. Like a phrase in a book, it was used in a different context, establishing different relations revealing different meanings, highlighting some of its complexity. In this case the piece served to reveal added background layers as much as its own presence.

Its presentation established yet more interactions. The second time *Time Piece Beacon* is presented, starts not *dal niente* but at an amplitude level where it was just to perceptible and ended “early” before it reached the highest level. This alteration to the piece also responds to the manner the materials were being treated, taking the risk and liberty to intervene them, as a form of appropriate the material.

It also has the compositional effect of denying expectation. *Smell* starts a couple of minutes after Neuhaus has ended, leaving a space between *Smell* and the second *Time Piece Beacon*, the ending of this second one is not heard as triggering the other piece, unlike the first occasion *Time Piece Beacon* ends.

That ending was synchronized with another piece that was simultaneously running: *Telepathic piece* by Robert Barry, which started after the first Neuhaus and which ends at the same moment the second Neuhaus ends too. This served as another way of connecting the two *Time Piece Beacons*.

It is worth commenting that this work was brought into a different situation, the concert situation, despite the fact that it unfolds in time, its original place belongs to a gallery or museum. It was not made for a performance event. In that sense it develops relation with the

overall structure of the composed concert, although it still preserves its essence. Or rather to say, the interactions it can elaborate, bring specific points of interest in relation with the multiple narrative of the concert, as stated previously.

But the pieces conserve their initial function of communication, in different way. The audience is already united by the concert but the piece clearly serves as a quasi-inverted continuation of the spray sound; it starts from nothing and grows continuously and conversely while the spray decays in its pressure, almost imperceptibly. This is the first connection, happening in the realm of sonic metonymy. Then when the first piece ends, *Politics of the Rehearsal* is recalled, establishing a different connection.

But the link between *Telepathic piece* and *Time Piece Beacon* performed a different process, an exchange of the roles of the attention.

Telepathic Piece

I came across this piece when I first read about conceptual art for the first time.¹²² I was truly absorbed by these kind of work that seem not to involve any perceivable material; the possibility of thinking in an idea as the piece of art, was extremely enabling for me. At that moment this knowledge was putting in question for me the traditional concept of piece, offering me a liberation from a technique that I didn't have to have. Or at least not in the sense of having to learn it for long period and by constant practice of a technique that could involve not a lot of intellectual work. In this sense, the *Telepathic Music* gave me the opportunity to perform a

¹²² A 2011 edition of Peter Osborne's *Conceptual Art*.

mental activity as a piece in my concert, a performance that would acquire several readings with the pieces around it.

Telepathic Piece is very related to music, given the fact that it is equally achieved through an invisible material, the thought for the *Telepathic piece* and in the sound for music. Also the piece is highly focused on the process that is formed in the thought of the spectator, a mental process that was directly related with how the meanings of my concert accumulate.

At the moment of the concert, by performing the piece, what was happening became background. As if behind me, were my thoughts in process. This kind of superposition of attention was operating in the concert all the time, like at the same moment, an invisible mental process was taking place on stage and in the audience and the same process of juxtaposition was happening between the sonic and visual layers. The apparently simple action of sitting on stage was talking about the concert itself.

And this is why I was doing at the same time *Music for Solo Performer* as an allegory of a piece that through thought, was producing the sounds around that thinking. It was a symbolic action used as a device to convey a hidden meaning. Referencing the piece as a quote, allowed me to compose at level of language, a layer of the musical performance in verbal meaning.

Using this kind of juxtaposition, I named the piece in the program also as 4'36'', making reference to a previous work of mine named 4'35'' which details I'll discuss later. Of course it was also a reference to Cage's, but in this particular case it created more sense with that previous intervention I've had already made. Whereas the silent reference with Cage was obvious, the local sequence from my 4'35'' presented in the fall of 2015 was more present in

time and provided direct relation with the body of work that was presented and later, with the work I made in sculpture, more about that in next chapters.

Telepathic Piece starts right after *AXE* ends, to make a link between the medium of the piece, i.e. both performance pieces. *AXE* was unfolded in two paths after its ending, the sound and its aural connection to *Time Piece Beacon* and by the use of body and Chapareke as a connection to *Telepathic Piece*. The Chapareke is a device for balancing the universe's energies but at the same time, being the key of God's house, it is an instrument of contact that permits you to get to God. So it serves to manage those forces while *Telepathic Piece* is about transmitting those forces.

I personally performed the piece by sitting in front of the audience for about 4 minutes and 36 seconds in silence. *Time Piece Beacon* was happening, then when it finished, *Politics of Rehearsal* was being performed in the background, for the second time, with the difference that now you could actually hear the rehearsal. The rehearsal was behind me but the sound of it was now in the audible range, in front of the audible perception. The audience could realize it was something like a baroque fugue, almost done, in construction, as when an idea starts to be formed in the imagination and appearing in the awareness. As a thought emerging from the stage and materializing into your ear.

Time Piece Beacon started again, a second time, when it finished, my telepathic performance was done, or better, was ended. It also served as a signal. *Politics of Rehearsal* was still going, emerged from the white noise that gave it start before and occluded it after. As a process of meanings taking control depending of the context, an energy system being organized.

Smell

Politics of Rehearsal ended at the moment when *Smell* started, the video was projected on the same screen that *Victor Huerta* was projected and, as with the *AXE* piece, no other piece was happening simultaneously. This established the same situation for both, a means of drawing them together through a focusing silence.

The voice-over about smell strengthened that dialogue. One could easily relate both pieces and renew one's awareness of the odor of the spray deodorant still in the environment. I thought the senses were busy having their flashback, enough to bear more pieces at the same time. Although in fact, *AXE* was happening in the memory again. And furthermore, after *Telepathic Piece*, one could observe a relation to the inert gas pieces of Robert Barry.

I came up with the piece when I realized that a border was about to be crossed, when my wife was about to come from México. I asked her to bring me some air from there in order to release it here in the US. She made the video and sent it back to me for use in the recital. Reading the video as the document of an alien odor crossing the border, was a transmutation of what was happening to that man in the documentary. Enacting his words to the extreme of performing an action about a story that happened in a different place and time. A quote as a resonance transformed by context.

Voice and image start at the same time, the actual sound of the video is muted, then when the discourse ends, the sound of the video fades in and allows for a minute, the discourse to be digested, finally the container is closed and the video fades out. A little bit of aural reality is filtered there when the audio of the video can be heard, coming from the other side of the border, invoked by sound and staying in the form of odor.

It was also about addressing the problem of illegal immigration in a poetic practice. Crossing borders had become a recurrent topic in my work since I have been studying at the US, it was a situation that was very present for me as a Mexican, before coming here I did have interest for social issues but now I was included in this particular condition without being completely aware of that, not as an illegal but, as my visa states, as a non-resident alien. I had to figure out how my relation to this power structures. A situation that is unavoidable but that could make my relation decidedly powerful too. Social context is for me, very present as background in everything we do, and especially in art, where everything is susceptible to reading as part of an artwork. Part of the work I developed here was about dealing with my unavoidable condition, as we will see later in my sculpture and previous pieces.

Ganoko

Understanding the Chapareke as a device to balance the energies in the universe, I had on one hand, the Rarámuri presence from the videos used in the piece, and on the other hand, the western traditional music culture, given by the Viola da Gamba. Several layers of meaning were put on stage.

After the *Smell* piece, this piece established two different subtle meanings. The one about a form colonization mentioned before and another one about the category or type of this work.

About the later meaning. This piece was the most akin to a regular music performance, i.e. the musician, an instrument and the music as the only material to transmit. Before this, *Politics of Rehearsal* had happened, also as a regular piece, two performers and their

instruments, but with it, some other pieces were having place simultaneously. *Star Networks* had also happened, approximately in the same manner.

This time, *Ganoko* was presented as a musical performance without any other actions juxtaposed. This solo situation was also used with *AXE*, as a strategy to suggest the additional layers in their full inner complexity.

At that moment, a more general strata was made clear: there were pieces operating in the concert, which belonged to the category of music. *Ganoko* was in this group, which would become more evident with the piece *Inverted Obelisk*, another piece that was also with musical instruments. So the materials in the concert acquired another way to be understood, as residing in the categories of performances, actions without sound, and music.

The juxtaposition of the Viola da Gamba with the Chapareke videos exposed another layer. I was playing the Gamba in my own way, horizontally on a table, with a stripped screw, a cello bow and a portable fan. And it was connected to the computer for granular synthesis live processing. So the material of the piece was already juxtaposing an early culture with a recent one. And the videos featured talk about the Chapareke, about its ritual relations and its function as a tool of power. The mystic idea of balancing energies was invoked and was operating in contrast with the sound of the piece, it was taking over the possible readings about it. The piece could be seen as the balancing of energies ritual, the Rarámuri cosmogony taking control over the purpose of the Gamba.

Perhaps the commentary about juxtapositions of cultures in relation with the Chapareke might be accessible just by knowing the previous version of *Ganoko* (the *Onorúame*

piece). An actually wanted consequence, a result that speaks about the necessity of context for a wider understanding of things.

That was precisely a characteristic of my concert, each piece had its own existence and its interdependence with the others at the same time.

Fugue I / II

As with *Ganoko* this pairing of pieces was presented without any concurrent processes. They were enclosed in a traditional approach to composition, performance, and the relation of instruments to music. Almost every piece was socially grounded in an evident manner. These two were purely musical, a quote from Bach, not offering a personal approach to composition, or a new way to understand the instruments, but as a practice very far from where I was now. A moment measuring a distance and crossing the border between social awareness and the abstract language of pitched sound. After the amount of information before, they appear as something that was left behind, and came to the foreground as music that had been there in the background, in history, but that now we could hear it clearly. As with a smell triggering a memory.

But they had more consequences in the large scale contextual layer. Besides being read as the result of *Politics of Rehearsal*, the structural consequence was to achieve a decay in the amount of information the concert was presenting, a thinning in density. Leaving the exercise of making simultaneous and multilayered relations by driving the attention towards the abstract matter of the music itself. In a way the *Fugues* were acting as a prelude, preparing the ground for something denser: the communication with a dead artist that would take place afterwards.

Breath Breathing in Concert

In the creative act, the artist goes from intention to realization through a chain of totally subjective reactions. His struggle toward the realization is a series of efforts, pains, satisfaction, refusals, decisions, which also cannot and must not be fully self-conscious, at least on the esthetic plane.
Duchamp. The Creative Act (1957)

When Diane Hiller and I walked to the stage, the fugues had just ended and the environment still smelled like deodorant spray. When the communication with Duchamp started, the dialogue with the *Telepathic* arose gently out of the background structure. This was succinctly the context of our attempt to communicate with Duchamp.

Diana Hiller was late and I couldn't think in any other reason but karma, I had to go outside the World Music Hall, in the middle of the recital, to find her cause she was lost around the campus, it was hilarious and ironic, a clairvoyant couldn't see the way to go. But also impossible not to see the subtle subtext: I had to run outside precisely when the *Fugues* were being performed. 'Fugue' comes from the Latin 'fugere' which means 'to flee' and also is related with 'fugare' which means 'to chase', and in Spanish the word 'fuga' means 'to escape'. Which also makes me think of it as a metaphor for the function of art or a poetic semiosis, where the object –or the word, or a sound– escapes from its historical or petrified meaning, to an open ontology defined by a new context or new relations that the realm of art can provide. Or in the romantic idea of the artist as the anti-hero who makes his way outside of social conventions.

The first thing I asked her was if he was there. She said yes and started to speak. When Duchamp was talking to her, the situation was very performative, in the sense that it was truly

a staged poetry and acting. The words came as a stream of thought, she appeared to be very concentrated telepathically so that, the quality of the speech she was obtaining, was poetic, abstract, sometimes faltering and very fast. The kind of communication she was developing, in the context of Duchamp and the concert, soon acquired an understated resemblance with sound poetry. A distinct language for communication, a new language of composition for me.

Translating those energies into a communicative language seemed to be a very complex commission demanding a very skillful medium. Bringing sense from the other side was as dangerous as welding words with steel. I realized that I needed it to manage the situation like a musician playing an instrument, in a sense, all the words and the meaning they can achieve, were never ending and multiple. The path Duchamp's thoughts could take was uncontrollable and barely predictable. My strategy was to control the rhythm of the happening, making silence, giving time for the ritual for to happen and to recover its solemn nature.

I would be delighted if Duchamp were alive and we could talk, I had a lot of things I wanted to know about his art that were not in the books and that I thought were not either in his pieces themselves either. But through this whole process I realized that the things that interested me about Duchamp, weren't things that were communicable through speech.

Instead of trying to communicate with him to arrive at a formula to understand his art, the piece followed the modes of operation in his work that were most important to me.

I recognized how in his work the idea of secrecy operates at a deep level¹²³. I acknowledged how desire, acts like a device to dive further in vast pieces, an approach that leads you towards an understanding of the piece as a conglomerate of different media that

¹²³ For instance, as in the collaborative Ready-Made from 1916: *With Hidden Noise, or Étant donnés : 1° la chute d'eau 2° le gaz d'éclairage...*

serves to decentralize the artistic experience¹²⁴. I became more aware about the importance of the required mental exercise underlying the work.

So I preferred to enact this ideas, to provoke them as a thought. To make a piece that in the same sense, could show itself by occluding itself. To pronounce and built its surroundings, 'to grasp things with the mind the way the penis is grasped by the vagina'.¹²⁵

There was no better way to do it than in the realm of spirituality, embedded in the ritual of music performance. Running away from the materialistic conception mentioned by Beuys and quoted earlier.

Diane Hiller was building a new language like Victor Huerta, her way to talk was a transmutation from the other world to the sound of her words, it was poetry and telepathy at the same time, and it was simultaneously herself and Duchamp. She was the border between reality and the realm of dead, and I was the performer interacting with these system of energies.

After my meeting with Diane at her office, reading the world as a text was an activity that acquired her mystical approach and somehow, interpreting life in relation with Duchamp had been triggered: the day after of our meeting I got a very useful message from Matt Wellins, who had given me a ride to her office.

Outside of the Medium's office, there was a noise generator..this brand "marpac" makes them (they look like this...https://www.google.com/search?q=marpac&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwizp5mLYeDPAhUGaT4KHTfvDBYQ_AUICygE&biw=1151&bih=671)

therapists generally use them outside of their doors to prevent people from hearing what's happening inside..

¹²⁴ As in *La Jeune mariée mise à nue par ses célibataires, Même*

¹²⁵ Steefel, Lawrence. interview. *The Position of Duchamp's Glass in the Development of His Art*. Garland, New York, 1977, p. 312.

but i was thinking that first of all, it's sort of a 98uchampian sculpture – since you can't actually see what's making the noise inside of the box..they say it's a “fan”, but it's hard to say what kind of fan exactly would make a white noisesound..

and then, the other thing is that there's something about leaning up against a door and trying to hear what's inside....sort of like “etant donnes”... [sic]

At the end of my meeting with Duchamp, Diane gives me the glass jar, filled with air from México in preparation for the last piece of the concert.

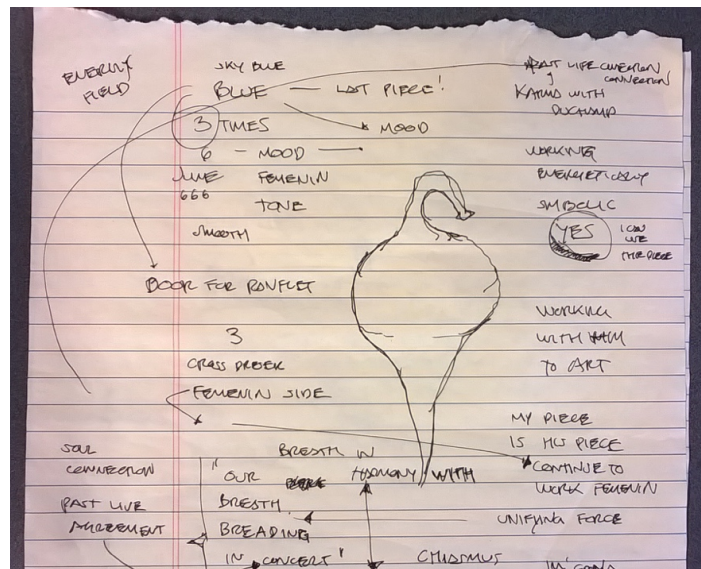


Illustration 3. Detail of the notes taken in the first meeting.

Inverted Obelisk

Hiram Navarrete was the first Mexican studying in Wesleyan in the Music department's masters program. So referring to him also refers to a specific part of the recent history of Mexican music. Hiram belongs to a group of Mexican composers educated in Las Rosas Conservatorium, in Morelia, México, under the teaching of Germán Romero, whose students were well known for their radical approach to composition. During the 2000's, the

Conservatorium was a very vibrant place for new music, I participated in some festivals there and I consider those moments as a very important part of my independent education. I was more inclined to an avant-garde approach than to the traditional education I was having at the time in the university from my city. The use of his piece was an homage to the courage some composers had at that time, in taking risks in their compositions.

Although as an intervention to the piece, with some irony and irreverence, I decided to invert the direction of the *glissando*. While the score does not really indicate if this *glissando* should be from the low register to the high, all of the interpretations are done in that way. Even the version for flute is performed from the lowest note possible, to the highest.

I was thinking in doing this piece also for a wind instrument. One of my composition colleagues at Wesleyan also played the bassoon, Warren Enström, to whom the piece is dedicated. Warren's house was in front of an obelisk dedicated to the veterans of the World War II. Inverting the direction of the piece was also inverting the homage object and the image of that obelisk being inverted was very related to the idea of taking a piece done here at Wesleyan –Hiram's and the actual obelisk– and turn it upside-down, in addition to the idea of ironizing the way we commemorate the achievements of our people. The operation of ridiculing the sublime was taken from Eduardo Abaroa's *Portable Broken Obelisk (for outdoor markets)*, in relation with the obelisk in front of Warren's house.

Coming towards the end of the concert, a *glissando* from the high register of the bassoon to the low register, was a cheap but clear commentary on the the concert's structure. After being at the altitude of the abstract idea about life after death, a descent was necessary.

A last juxtaposition was made over the piece, a barely audible voice over of Hiram Navarrete talking in English and Spanish about the piece. A *pianissimo* voice from the

composer establishing the long distance between him and the audience. Talking about the idea of the piece, from a very delicate place, the place where ideas begin to slowly gestate.

The physical acoustics of the bassoon make it very difficult to achieve a continuous *glissando*, at the beginning we decided to keep these breaks in the *glissando* as part of the piece. Later I started to try the same process in a different wind instrument. Keeping a wind instrument for the piece obeyed to the necessity of breath in the piece, to have an organic relation with the last one, *Air From México*, and the preceding, *Breath Breathing in Concert*. Also the irregularities and the breaks made the process imperfect and human, as all the relations I was doing. Then I tried Baritone Sax with Sean Sonderegger – a Ph. D. student in Ethnomusicology– and decided to have both instrument perform the same process at the same time, a continuation of the juxtaposition strategy.

This gave me the possibility to explore more connotations. As you couldn't see Hiram Navarrete speaking, like with Duchamp, the occlusion of the performers was latent. For the concert, they started to play from down the stairs, one in each side of the hall. The World Music Hall has two different accesses to the audience, left and right side of it are accessed from downstairs. While the *glissandi* were progressing down, they were going upstairs slowly, changing not only the acoustic quality of their instruments, but also the acoustics of the room. An exercise of transmutation for speeding down the attention of the audience, the slow harmonic changes between the two continuous *glissandi*, gave the opportunity for sound contemplation as an ear cleaner, walking entirely some part of the audible register. The performers were never seen and could not see each others, the audience was acting as a wall, a border, but the sound was crossing the space freely.

Air From México

The intention was to bring air and odor from México and release it in the US, illegally, poetically speaking. It is the poetic immigrant version of *55 cc of Paris Air*, whereas his piece is a Ready-Made, the Mexican version is the releasing of that air, having crossed the US border.

At the end of *Inverted Obelisk*, the glass jar given to me by Diane and filled with air from México, was waiting for me at the table where I met with Duchamp. I took a hammer and with just a hit I smashed it into pieces.

Instead of a safer and poetic action such as just open the jar and let the air escape, breaking the glass had the impact of a violent disruption, and it was necessary gesture for finishing the concert as an explosive liberation, an intense eruption of contained energy. Moreover, I wanted to have a clear visual relation with a drawing I made in my self-taught years of a broken glass, which I used as the cover of my first CD¹²⁶, it was also a symbolic act to break with that music.

The air was released and the memory of *AXE* was triggered again. A migration of invisible energy took place releasing the attention of the audience, as it was the end of the concert.

Pink Encore Fiasco

During my study at Wesleyan I was encountered with several music cultures and people from diverse parts of the world. The context was a very inspiring vibrant stream of ideas coming from very different minds and traditions.

¹²⁶ <http://www.oegf.info/cd-vacio/>

I had a very particular encounter that led to a curious piece. One of my colleagues, Tomek Arnold, came from Poland, a country with some distinct manners alike México, specifically in the way we used to drink alcohol.

Around the first semester we used to have some drinks for distressing the insane amount of work we had at the beginning of the career. Once he brought a special gift for me: a family home made vodka, one made out of lemon and another one from cherry. The first time we had a drink together he bought a very cheap bottle of rose wine. The bottle was ridicule, but the color of the beverage was even worse, it was a very brilliant pink, like “rosa mexicano”, a kind of pink that holds the name of “Mexican pink”. Up to this date I still bully him for that tacky beverage. After that, whenever we drink we use the word “pink” as a substitute for the verb “to drink” and for the words, beer, wine or whatever alcoholic beverage. All our colleagues know that code now.

We started to reproduce that family recipe and fantasize about it like if it was a collaborative art work. And in fact it was. I was aware that we were doing cultural crossings, implementing a multicultural beverage in a multicultural university. I called this *The pink project bros*¹²⁷. I even performed the recipe in México and I was very excited about having a sort of code to make this substance, that had traveled from Poland to México, it was a piece with huge topographic dimensions.

For my concert I offered the drink to the audience. And I got into trouble. It was a boundary crossing with a sip of communion. But undergrads were there and I was reported by the Staff in charge of the event. The situation ended up in the office of graduate students. I had to talk with them and convince her that I had no problems with alcohol. I explained we usually had a glass of wine after colloquiums at music department, and the function that this has in our

¹²⁷ <http://www.oegf.info/pink-project-bros/>

contact with the invited people to those talks. The music department knew about this when the situation was already solved, for reasons that I don't know.

But I remember that the whole happening revealed to me the delicate boundaries and perhaps ambiguous inside of the University about matters like alcohol regulations, and how the insistence from the authority about taking care of me, suggested more that they were taking care of the problems this could bring for them, as more than one student told me "they're just covering their asses".

The issues were wonderfully didactic, on one side I had done pieces in the music department that would've given me a lot of problems in México, but a usual practice in México was giving me little problems here, outside of the department.



Illustration 4. The Pink Project Bros on the table after the last piece.

Chapter IV

Different approaches to creative forces

Dealing with social systems was a very present way to approach composition since I came to Wesleyan University, the content of my works were embedded in social and power relations, my conceptual techniques were about to be developed.

4'35'

During my first semester I befriended and hired a Peruvian custodian to perform 4'33" and then read a statement indicating that she was being paid more to do nothing for 4'33" than she was to work on cleaning the hall for two hours¹²⁸.

It was the introduction concert we had to do for the first semester, it was the first piece I did here at Wesleyan. I remember I had the intention of doing a piece that could intervene the concert. So I was thinking in a performance to put before the piece I had in the program. Nobody except my colleague Tomek knew about my intentions before the concert.

At that time, I was very influenced by the ideas and pieces by Santiago Sierra, a Spanish artist living and working in México. His uses to work with employees and addresses the boundaries between labor and art, his work is very polemic and inspiring¹²⁹. One of the first pieces in where he pays a person for doing his art, is *Line of 30 cm tattooed on a remunerated person*, from 1998:

I looked for a person who did not have any tattoos or intentions of having one, but due to a need for money, would agree to have a mark on his skin for life. This person received \$50 [Mexican pesos] as payment.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ The video can be watched here: <http://www.oegf.info/4-35/>

¹²⁹ http://www.santiago-sierra.com/index_1024.php

¹³⁰ The piece can be seen here: http://www.santiago-sierra.com/982_1024.php

As Wesleyan represented for me a University where experimental music tradition and the thought of John Cage were very present, I decided to bring one of the most emblematic pieces by Cage, 4'33'', to a more present economic reality. I used the Santiago Sierra's approach of employing a person to manifest the need and power of money. I employed a Peruvian worker who cleans the spaces at Wesleyan University, Vanessa Castro. I paid her the equivalent of one hour of work of my graduate student stipend to sit and say, between every movement of the piece, information about the piece.

I discovered then, the potentiality of this simple but powerful gestures, and my work in Wesleyan began to take a specific direction towards dealing with strategies of social power as compositional material.

The title was a practical decision, I'm sure after 4'33'' a lot of pieces had happened in relation to it –which could be the topic for another thesis– so all of them would be conceptually 4'34''. Mine was yet after those, so 4'35'' was the consequent name for it.

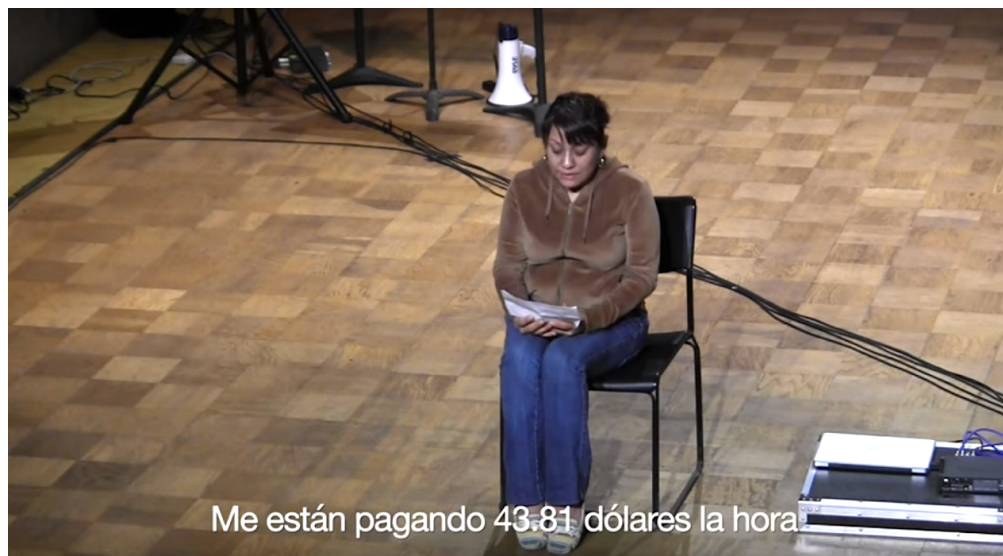


Illustration 5. Still from the of the concert.

Transduce | privilege

This Concert intervention is about migration of energies from one realm to another.

The notion of transducer allows to transform a text material into its different outputs. The text material is about my immigrant situation at that time. Of course this processes are inherent in power exercises.

Before the performance of the piece, and before audience comes in, an announcement must be made:

Only people with a non-US passport is allowed to enter. After the piece ends, all people should come in. The announcement should be made by the staff of the venue. The concert is transmitted by a performer inside the concert via cellphone to the American people outside or at the lobby. Another performer receives the narration there and transmits it to the Americans via megaphone.

At the end the American people can get into the hall and the rest of the concert can go as usual.¹³¹

Bottle Rack Quote

Plagiarism is necessary. Progress demands it. Staying close to an author's phrasing, plagiarism exploits his expressions, erases false ideas, replaces them with correct ideas.

Guy Debord - The Society Of The Spectacle
(1967)

After Duchamp, to think where the authorship is in art, is quite more a full of possible answers strategy rather than an up-to-date exigency for art theory, as this paradigm is fluctuating

¹³¹ A video and score can be seen here: http://www.oegf.info/transduce_privilege/

through history and as now could have more to do with copyrights and the market side of art. However, in this piece the exploration seemed to be more ludic. It was a work in team, I was working with an undergrad who I already knew from Experimental Music 109 class. Shared authorship from the beginning, music background at both sides; the remaking of Duchamp's ready-made was sort of a cover version of the piece. Layers of palimpsest.

Even more, I had already done a bottle rack before (of course not by myself but I had it done by asking to a blacksmith friend), it was around 2010, but now in this case my collaborator at sculpture was suggesting to twist the shape of the ready-made a little bit. So at the end, I could read the piece as twisted by the overloaded torsion of each author iteration.

Maybe is worth to say that in a last twist, our piece recovered its functionality and on the grass, it looked organically like a flower.



Illustration 6. The Bottle Rack installed.

The fence. Two video installations

This two works became, at the end, a part of a bigger piece, here is just the description of each one. A third work was added for the final exhibition to complete a whole piece with it. I will detail more about the entire piece when the description of that third piece comes later. The first work is a reaction to a letter by Robert Lansing, a former secretary of state under president Woodrow Wilson; a quote of which I've been working lately:

Mexico is an extraordinarily easy country to dominate, as it necessary to control only one man: The President. We must abandon the idea of installing an American citizen in the Mexican presidency, as that would only lead us, once again, to war. The solution requires more time: we must open the doors of our universities to young, ambitious Mexicans and make the effort to educate them in the American way of life, in our values, and in respect for the leadership of the United States. Mexico will need competent administrators, and over time, these young people will come to occupy important positions and will eventually take possession of the presidency itself. And without the United States having to spend a single cent or fire a single shot, they will do what we want, and do it better and more radically than we ourselves would have done.¹³²

The video is the register of an action: stealing a book from Olin library at Wesleyan¹³³, the book is *Mexico's Revolution Then and Now* by James D. Cockcroft and on the page 77 on the chapter four, *Neoliberal Terrorism, Immiseration, Destruction of Families*, those words from 1924 by Lansing –former secretary of state under W. Wilson– are quoted.

¹³² Cockcroft, James, *Mexico's revolution then and now*. New Yor, 2010, p. 77.

¹³³ A very particular point of my interest occurs here and it is how the boundary between real and representation is blurred and used as a very powerful tactic when the use of veracity instead of truthfulness shapes reality in order to bring the piece to its ultimate realization. To negotiate the importance and the purpose in reality of each phase, process and part of a piece is dealing with how dominance could be an artistic material as much as a political matter. To be aware of these different joints and in what level and quality they are working is vital for the construction of the piece.

The video is looped and projected on a wall, in front of the wall –without blocking the projection– is the actual book closed, on a music stand. Besides the book, headphones and a black sheet of paper are laying. This paper is folded by the middle, its ‘cover’ says “page 77”, at inside, when the paper is unfolded, the quote is there, printed on, but censored. On the video, the quote also appears illegible.

The second one. I took a video register of the last performance I did before coming to Wesleyan. I was a collaborative piece. The performance is about the first cello suite by Bach. The score gets sick from atherosclerosis, the pages of the score change visually, the music changes, the cello dies killed by the sick music. At the end we destroy the cello¹³⁴.

I took only the last movement from the video –the gigue– where the cello dies, and inserted a voice-over from my mother, narrating a past event in which I destroyed my car.

The video is looped and projected on a wall, over a quote. The quote is written on the wall; the video happens over all. The quote is by Herman Hesse’s *Demian*:

The bird flights its way out of the egg
The egg is the world

Who would be born
must first destroy a world

The bird flies to God
That God’s name is Abraxas¹³⁵

The quote defines the perimeter where the projection fits, the words are printed in black. It is not impossible to read the text behind the video but waiting for to get a chance among the projected light, is needed.

¹³⁴ Video and documentation: <http://www.oegf.info/suite/>

¹³⁵ Hesse, Herman. *Demian*. 1919, p. 35. At: <http://biblio3.url.edu.gt/Libros/2011/Demian.pdf>

The fence, the authenticity and the settlement as an artistic process

Related with crossing boundaries and also related with a previous work (*Transduce_Privilege* – concert intervention), the situation about México-US migration gave me for this piece the initial departure to explore an intervention dealing with borders and negotiation of space.

Two ways were explored. The first idea was to block a specific pathway on campus that starts with music department and continues to art studios area. Rather than the actual event of having US citizen complaining about a border and having them solving the problem by jumping, remove and crossing it; one of the most interesting dynamics was the one about how to make the piece possible.

Due to safety and accessibility issues I was not allowed to block a space on campus, unless I asked for permission. This particularity changed completely the real impact of the piece for me. And asking for permission made the piece rather a fake intervention or just a class assignment, instead of a genuine irruption act.

The notion of the so called ‘real’ about a piece arose for me since the performance of a previous piece I did as a concert intervention last fall semester¹³⁶. It is the scission, the fissure between representation and perception, a strategy for giving potential life to an event.

Asking for permission or not, was a question that would decide if I was a student or an artist –despite the fact that I was doing it in the safe environment of a university because in it, those levels of reality and political affairs are also present and happening all the time as a matter of fact.

The question became clear talking with Paula Matthusen. When I was debating with myself, Paula clarified this question of making the piece more real by not asking for permission, as an event happening ‘only in my head’. At the moment, I was thinking the piece just as an

¹³⁶ The 4’33’ Latino worker version or 4’35’’ as I entitled the piece.

open-air sculpture but those words gave me enlightenment. If the piece was thought as an irruptive coherence –as nobody ask us to make the border wall, for instance–, or made it up specifically as a public-space intervention, then that would be a different piece, a concrete situation, as Paula agreed too.

Part of the ontology of a piece lies on how does the artist make it happening, how he makes it possible. It is also part of the artistic technique, essential to the artist's abilities and a delimeter of the actors' agency (the creator, the institutions, the audience and so on). I understand the preoccupation by the department by taking care about not to harm anybody with this kind of activities as much as I am aware that this also defines a boundary that triggers my interest.

So, the first exercise was to place the piece near the main entrance to the music department, blocking the main north/south passage through the building.

The shape of the physical piece changed through different sizes and materials, at the beginning I thought in made just a big square sheet of steel, but the abstraction of the object that was meant to refer to walls, doors or obstructions in a broader sense; was functioning rather unclear. Then Jeffrey suggested to copy the actual border between México and US, but the variety of shapes that in fact the border wall has is big.

I came across with the solution while I was watching a documentary¹³⁷ about the US/México border. In it, two North Americans are seen placing a big poster with the sentence "Good fences make good neighbors. Robert Frost" on it. I knew then that I had to block the way with a fence.

The piece also had two QR codes with different hyperlinks each on, one was facing the south side and the other was facing the north side. The code for the south addressed the

¹³⁷ *Op. Cit.* Stephanie Barbey & Luc Peter.

encounter to this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olq52YzYP3o>. And to this gif at the north side: <http://makeagif.com/i/xRIkxO>. The QRs were printed on wood with laser cutter, in order to keep the fence-like home style. The fact that not all people has a smartphone with a QR scanner app, points to elitism as another way of boundary or barrier, is another layer that can narrow the reading of the piece.

On the video, one message is given through the visuals and another through the audio. It shows the book from the first video installation, the book is being leafing through and the Lansing's quote appears and is obstructed with my hand before it can be read. From the audio a voice is heard, it is a North American from the same documentary, talking about the smell of Mexican people.

The fence was placed from noon to afternoon, some video recordings were taken, they show how people dealt with the obstruction, some of them jumped the fence, some other moved it and finally the fence was left lying on the floor.

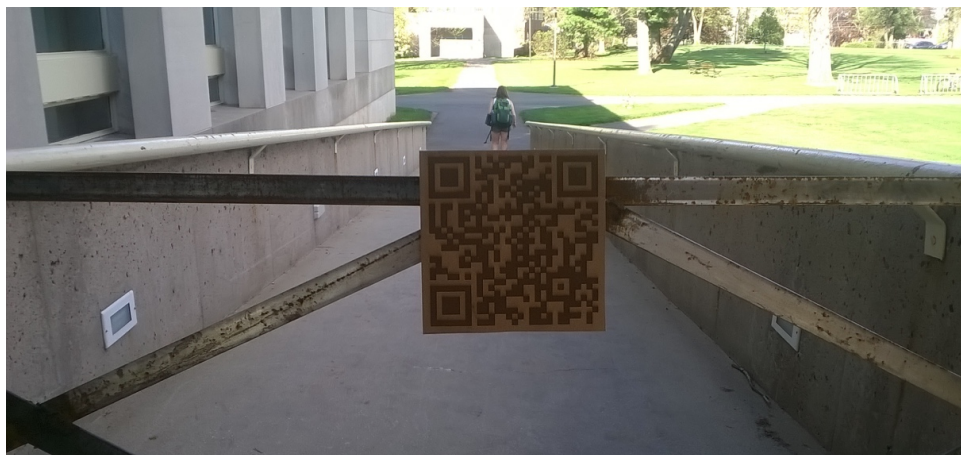


Illustration 7. Detail of the QR code on the fence installed outside of Zilkha Gallery.

For the second intervention the fence was placed near the main entrance to the CFA's Zilkha Gallery, at the top end of the ramp. The event that gave the the ultimate sense to the

piece was David Shimomura being pissed off because he couldn't get through the fence with a cart he was moving, he got to move the fence by himself and brought the topic about safety shouting that the fence had to be moved. Nobody moved the fence. After a while, Public Safety came, asking who the fence was, and demanding me to get rid of it. After an unfruitful dispute I finally moved the fence inside the art workshops. The fence proved its point. A division, an obstacle was shot down by a Mexican in the US. To bring a fence/border down was required by North Americans.

As I don't have wide documentation of that event, I've been thinking in interviewing David at some point, as part of the documentation¹³⁸.

Articulations of power, The body of work at exhibition

At the end of the class we presented a collective exhibition of our work. I decided to build a new piece by re contextualizing my previous works. The fence was part of that bigger work.

The two videos and the fence are entangled in various points; they refer mutually to themselves. Also, there are new elements in the final realization. The video installation consists of the two videos together, one music stand with the book, headphones and a pile of documents folded like program notes.

On the 'program notes' the Hesse's quote is printed in a way that is not possible to read it completely if the paper is not unfolded. When it is unfolded, the left side shows a book image at the Lansing's quote, censored, and with the number of the page printed at the top left corner (page 77). On the right side, a copy of the letter of acceptance to Wesleyan is printed.

The quote is making a direct relation with the Wesleyan letter, but it has to be read from the stolen book.

¹³⁸ Documentation of the piece can be watched here: <http://www.oegf.info/neighbors/>

The video about destroying the cello, with the audio about destroying a car is making a relation with the meaning of the Hesse's quote. The way in which all the elements are deployed ask for building or constructing a story that has to do with balancing forces by dealing with boundaries.¹³⁹

Abjection I memory_topographies

Based on the massacres in México since 1968, this piece is for Megaphone, Violoncello and Prepared Snare Drum.

1968 is a year embedded in the historical memory and imaginary of all Mexicans. The Mexican government killed around 300 students that were protesting in Mexico City. So, I decided to start from that year, even though more massacres have happened before that year.

A number of deaths in each massacre¹⁴⁰ served me to draw a timeline for the sound events in the piece.

I also wanted to contrast the very present difference between this social events with pop music. I took the most popular song in the US in each date of the massacres. Again a word connection was working at a poetic level: a hit song as a hit that kills.

The audio of each song was altered in Max MSP, triggered by the ensemble, the pop song was the massacre. The memory topography was perceived sonically, even though the social message was occluded, the sound poetic had been generated by these alteration of pop songs, sounding at that time in US during the murders in Mexico¹⁴¹.

It was also the kind of piece I needed to write as a part of a portfolio that I could use for applying to doctoral programs.

¹³⁹ Documentation of the piece: <http://www.oegf.info/articulations-of-power/>

¹⁴⁰ Information was taken from this site: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_massacres_in_Mexico

¹⁴¹ Audio and video here: http://www.oegf.info/abyeccion-memory_topographies/

Last recital

For this recital the social comments were less. They were limited to a piece and the use of *Victor Huerta* text for the last piece.

The stage was partially hidden by a long wide white paper, from the top left corner to the right bottom corner. It was an allegory of a wall. Next are the pieces I presented.



Illustration 8. Warren Enström installing the paper wall for the concert.

Articulation | Energy

Was the first piece, an improvisation with an instrument I built, a custom delay box made by a Arturo Ortega¹⁴², prepared Snare Drum –with an e-bow on the snares– and driven transducer Steel Pan.

The instrument I built was a simple steel sheet with a transducer attached, played with a screw and a brush mallet, generating feedback from the transducer.

¹⁴² An old friend and independent experimental musician from Guadalajara, part of his work here: <http://infra.amp-recs.com/>

One terminal of the transducer was connected to the tip of a RCA connector; the cable of this connector was going into the right output of the amplifier. The ground of the same RCA was connected to the brush mallet. The other terminal of the transducer was connected to the positive left of the amplifier output. A stripped screw was cabled and connected by mini TRS connector to the input of the amplifier. The transducer was attached to the middle of a rectangle steel sheet.

This set up gave me an electric feedback, amplified acoustically by the steel sheet. I had the possibility to play with the mallets and producing all kinds of sound, from noise to sines, and rhythmic chaotic sound behaviors.

The Prepared Snare Drum was connected to the delay box with a contact mic, and the overall output was going to a Steel Pan, which Hallie Blejewski a colleague and a Ph. D. student, lend me. At the same moment, my wife was projecting with an overhead projector, on the paper wall. Writing sentences on transparencies at that moment. Describing the sounds and images of the video that would be played after this piece. A description in the manner of closed captions English subtitles for hearing impaired people.



Illustration 8. The Steel Sheet's set up

Solidaridad

This next piece was a projection of a video made by the Mexican government in 1989, where they ask for solidarity with the government. A lot of national television actors and singers appear in this popular video¹⁴³.

The translated lyrics of the chorus were printed on the program.

Solidarity, we will win
From now on
We will take, Your Example
We will sing with a voice
The Union Effort
Forming a Great Nation
Solidarity, we will be
From The Child to the Elderly
In You We Believe, And We Will Be
Your Most Worthy Messenger
In Bad Or Very Good Times
We are eagles in flight

Premonition | manifesto

Last piece, composed for Throat Singer, Drum Set and another instrument I built, a bicycle wheel on a resonance box, played with cartridges. For this work I tried to approach sound as raw material for construction, the pulses generating by the bicycle wheel were giving me the overall sound and structure of the piece.

I could go gradually from pulses to sustained sound on the wheel, and I applied the same technique to the other instruments for develop sound material. Then instead of gradually going altogether from one state to another, I made cuts this long gradual transition, ending up with large chunks of this continuous process, and finally I mixed them up in different ways

¹⁴³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hCbnnewabpE>

until I achieved the desired shape to have a non-linear transition from pulses to continuous sound.

I had in mind the sound of the piece *Pulsers* by David Tudor, it was the initial burst of sound in my imaginary. I looked for this pulses in the drum set and get to a slow pulsation on the bass drum. Lowered in rate and frequency, this pulse acquired a somber character. Sustaining this sound activity for long period triggered the expectancy for more sound activity. At this moment the notion of premonition came to mi mind.

I use to compose this type of pieces, trying to play the instrument for which I'm writing. And usually I can spend long time listening to a single action on them, hence this technique to explore sound material was becoming the piece itself, a very gradual transition from one state to another.

The idea of premonition gave me the basis to imagine the overall form of the piece. If the pulses were long enough they could become structural points. Those points took the function of sudden changes. In this way I could contrast the non-linear chunks I have from cutting a slow and long process of gradual change.

The bass drum pulses became the anteroom for the prophetic message that the voice now could bear. The voice was included in the same acoustic process, and the text was always there, but very altered. The premonition pulses were expecting for the message in the voice, which was a manifesto.

The text was the words in subtitles on the *Victor Huerta* video, a very punk message.

So, at the end the sublimation of punk, having gone through very different paths during my masters, was patent here, the last message in the last piece, socially grounded, but very sound driven.

Conclusion

The master degree was intense and fast. During just two years I have produced a wide amount of work and it has traveled to very different approaches. Although all the body of work made in Wesleyan can be read as dealing with social and acoustic energies, the pieces were hard to categorize. On one hand I had musical pieces and on the other, pieces in the realm of performance art, in addition my encounter with self-made electronics was another category that was born here. However, the notion of not taking any fixed position towards art practice is now very present in my view. And I could acknowledge at the end of the masters, where I started to build some of my own instruments with electronics, the bicycle wheel played with cartridges and a metal sheet driven by feedback transducer.

The wide approaches I can have now, are taking a free direction that can be addressed to sound purposes and social ones. Having the knowledge of building electronics has been very empowering, it has given me the chance to think purely in sound, and compose directly with the acoustic phenomena, the same with the knowledge acquired about sound digital programming processes such as Supercollider and Max MSP. And the social engineering that I had the opportunity to experiment, has taken me to a higher conceptual thought about sound in social dynamics.

I can categorize those different strategies of composition in three broad groups, one belongs to the method of building electronic devices, and electroacoustic pieces, another one about a form of performance art in a music context, and a third one in relation with the use of instruments, performers and score. This last one, that I had done less in Wesleyan, appeared again in pieces like the one I compose for the Pamplémousse Ensemble, and in the last piece of my last thesis recital. They appeared as a coda of the whole body of composition I realized

here, I returned back to the environment of a score and performers as a revision of what these forms could offer me. But now everything was different, I've passed a no returning point.

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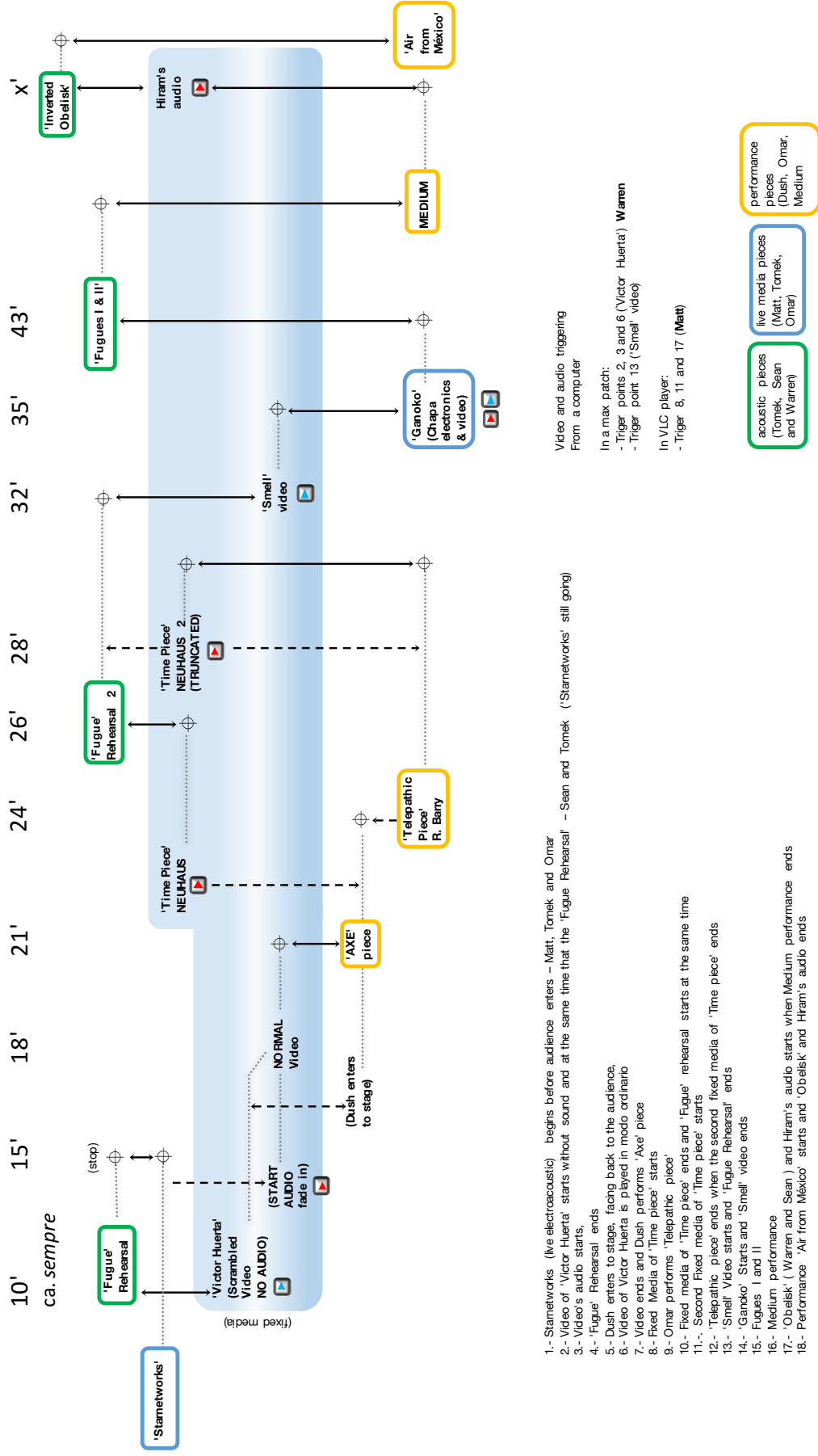
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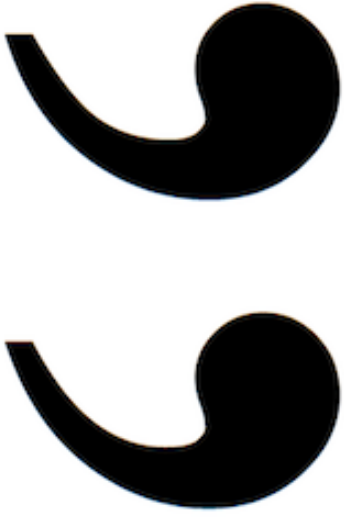
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Appendix

quotation_synergies

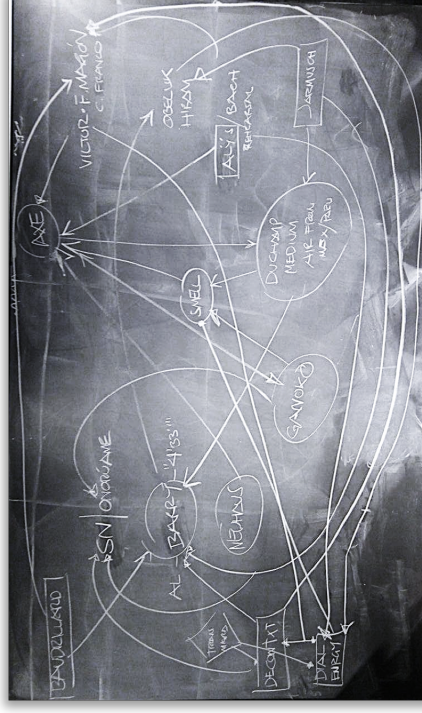


<i>The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth—it is the truth which conceals that there is none. The simulacrum is true</i>	StarNetworks at Onorúame's voice
<i>In any case, how can art remain politically significant without assuming a doctrinal standpoint or aspiring to become social activism?</i>	Politics of Rehearsal
<i>Nothing is original. Steal from anywhere that resonates with inspiration or fuels your imagination. Authenticity is invaluable; originality is non-existent. And don't bother concealing your thievery - celebrate it if you feel like it. In any case, always remember what _____ said: "It's not where you take things from - it's where you take them to."</i>	Victor Huerta
<i>Nothing is true. Everything is possible</i>	AXE
<i>No, we are against any kind of pedagogic device, we have no message to convey, we are artist, we make artwork, not propaganda. On our use of quotes we expect to be close what _____ wrote: "A quote must be like a bandit who assaults passersby"</i>	Time Piece Beacon
<i>sometimes doing something poetic can become political sometimes doing something political can become poetic</i>	Telepathic piece/Music for solo performer/4'36"
	unit signifier dialogue agency temporality decontextualization an action or idea that someone else could've said revealing what is possible a quote of a quote a copy a question repetition that creates difference when our acts already are quotes legitimation articulation of power delegation a resonant tomb
	Smell
	Ganoko
	Fugue I & II
	Breath breathing in concert
	Inverted obelisk
	Air from México
	*) (this is a non-linear program)



Matt Wellins
Cristian Franco
Dush
Tomek Arnold
Warren Enström
Sean Sonderegger
Diane Hiller

_quotation_Synergies
_omarFraire
2100hrs_Oct - 18_2016
WMH_CFA – Wesleyan_University



4'35''

Concert intervention for a Latin Worker

OEGF – 2015
Wesleyan University

1

*(go to the stage,
face the audience,
and say:)*

- Program has changed
- Before Omar's piece,
- I will perform: "cuatro piezas"
- Thank you.

2

*(wait for silence and
sit down)*

3

*(wait for silence and:
read each sentence loud and clear.
wait the indicated time to say the next sentence)*

- Me llamo: _____
- I have been paid to perform this silent piece for you today.
*(stay in silence for 30 seconds,
and look at the audience)*
- Soy de: _____
- I got paid \$_____ per hour for cleaning this university.
*(stay in silence for 2 minutes and 23 seconds and
look at the audience)*
- I'm getting paid \$43.81 per hour, for staying in front of you in silence.
*(stay in silence for 1 minute and 42 seconds,
and look at the audience)*

(stand up and say:)

- Muchas gracias!
- (bow to the audience and go out of the stage)*

ONORÚAME

Chapareke Hidrocálido + Live Electronics & Video
Omar Fraire - 2016

ONORÚAME

Program Notes:

The Chapareke is an ancient Ralámuli instrument from the north of México. It is built from the stem of the maguey's flower. It has three metal strings. The stick is placed over the mouth, the strings are plucked and the mouth acts as a resonance filter.

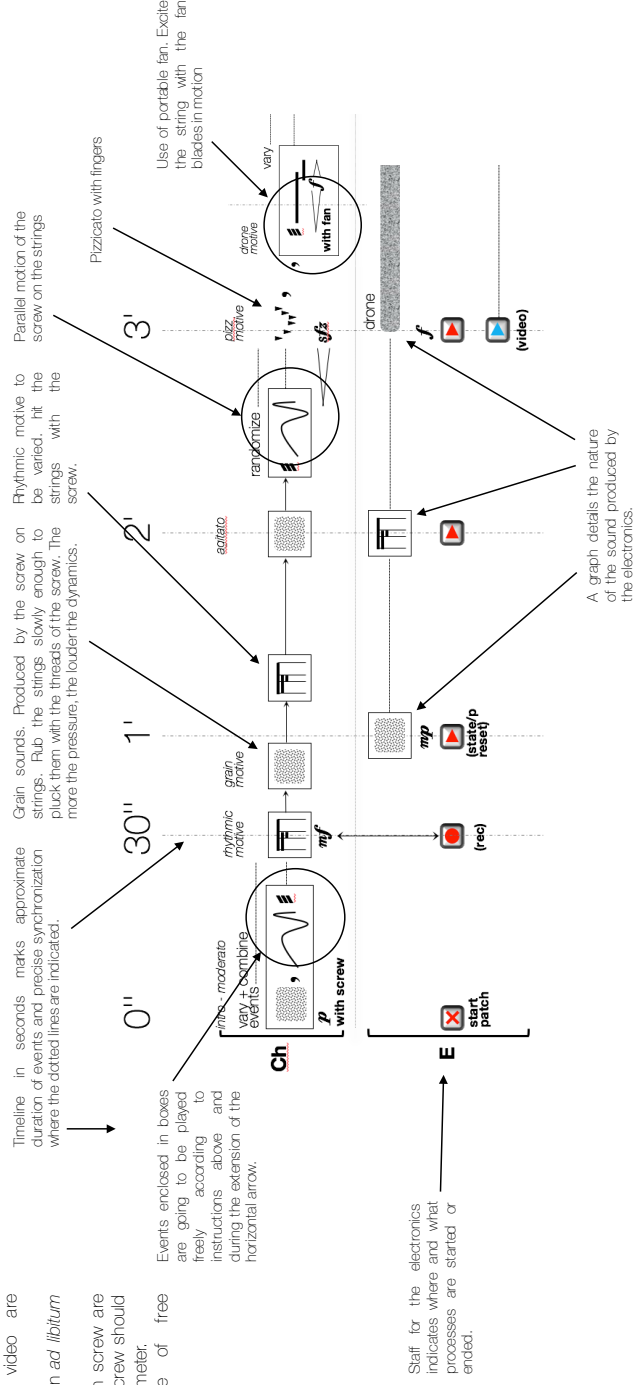
Onorúame gave this instrument to the Ralámuli people in order to balance the energy of the worlds. Its name means "the of God's house".

Performance Notes:

The Chapareke should be amplified and processed through max/msp. It also requires video projection. Processes and video are automatized in the patch.

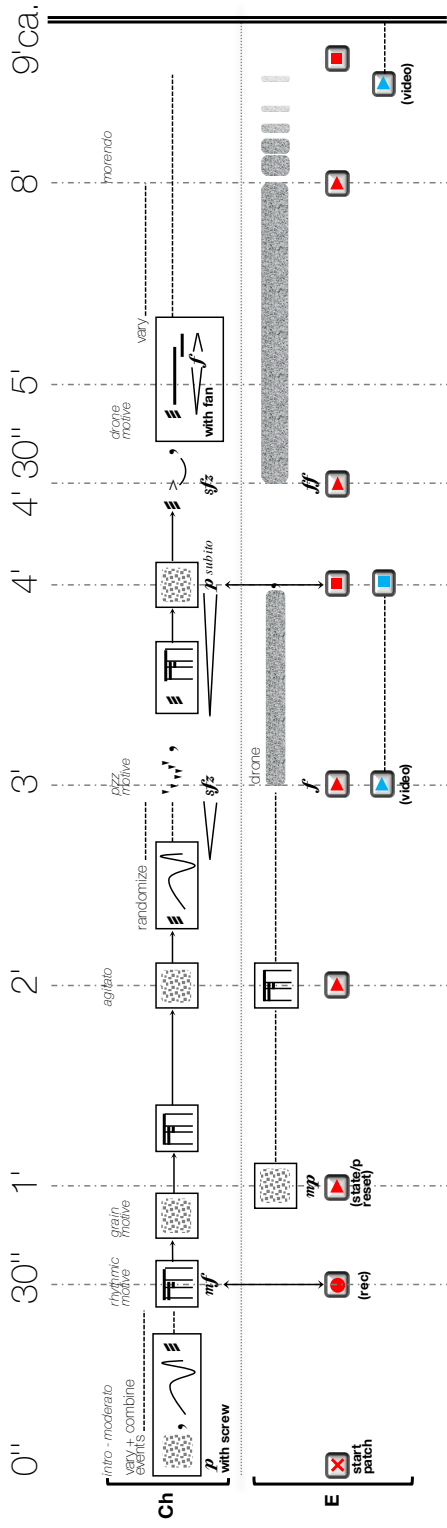
Tuning of the strings are unison at an *ad libitum* pitch.

A small portable fan and a long thin screw are required for string excitement. The screw should be about 20 cm long and 4mm of diameter. The score allows some degree of free interpretation.



ONORÚAME
Chapareke Hidrocálido + Live Electronics & Video

oegf

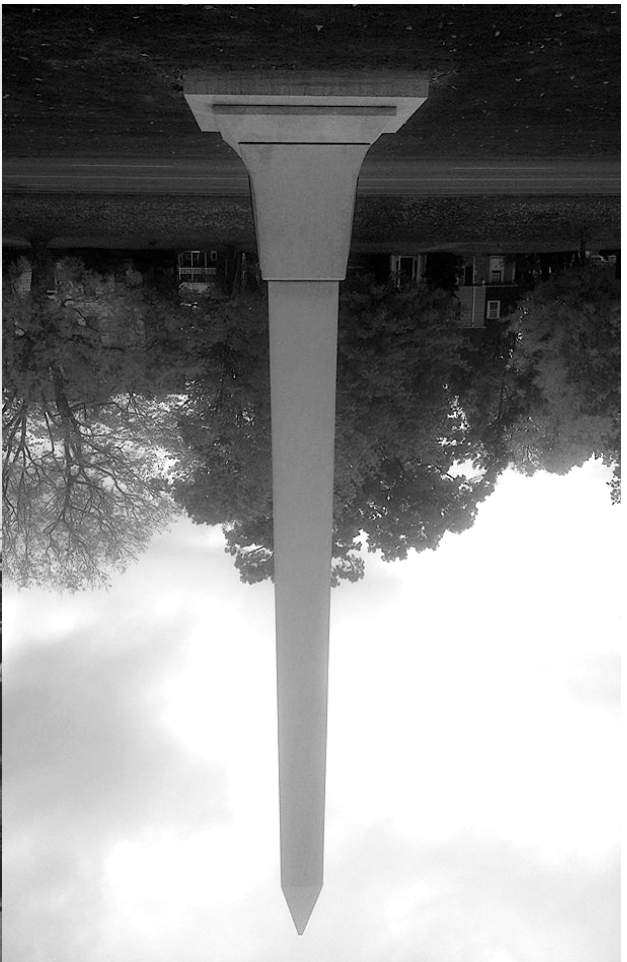


Middletown, CT
2016

obelisco|invertido

For Bassoonist
Dedicated to **Warren Enström**

Omar | Fraire
2015_Connecticut | US



Program Note

Obelisco Invertido is derived from the piece *Mazunte* for solo clarinet (2006), by the Mexican composer Hiram Navarrete. It is a musical quote in which the pitch progression of the alluded work is inverted. The irreverence of the gesture is taken from Eduardo Abaroa's piece *Obelisco roto portátil para mercados ambulantes* – A Portable Broken Obelisk for Street Markets – (1993). Thanks to Hiram for his collaboration throughout the process of writing this piece.

Nota al Programa

Obelisco Invertido se deriva de la pieza: *Mazunte* para clarinete solo (2006), del compositor Mexicano Hiram Navarrete. Es al mismo tiempo una cita que invierte la dirección progresiva de la altura en la pieza alusiva. La irreverencia del gesto es tomada de la pieza *Obelisco roto portátil para mercados ambulantes* (1993), de Eduardo Abaroa. Gracias a Hiram por su colaboración en el proceso para escribir esta pieza.

-Are you doing a definition of principle by this use?

-No, we are against any kind of pedagogic device, we have no message to convey, we are artist, we make artwork, not propaganda. On our use of quotes we expect to be close what Benjamin wrote: "A quote must be like a bandit who assaults passersby"

Claire Fontaine

Every room could have an anti-room

(A misheard) Dr. Chicago

- ¿Están haciendo alguna definición de principios con este uso?

- No, estamos en contra de cualquier tipo de dispositivo pedagógico, no tenemos ningún mensaje que transmitir, somos artistas, hacemos obras de arte, no propaganda. En nuestro uso de citas, esperamos estar cerca de ésta que escribió Benjamin diciendo: "Una cita tiene que ser como un bandido que asalta a los transeúntes"

Claire Fontaine

Cada cuarto podría tener un anti-cuarto

Dr. Chicago (mal escuchado)

Obelisco Invertido (Inverted Obelisk)

Omar Fraire

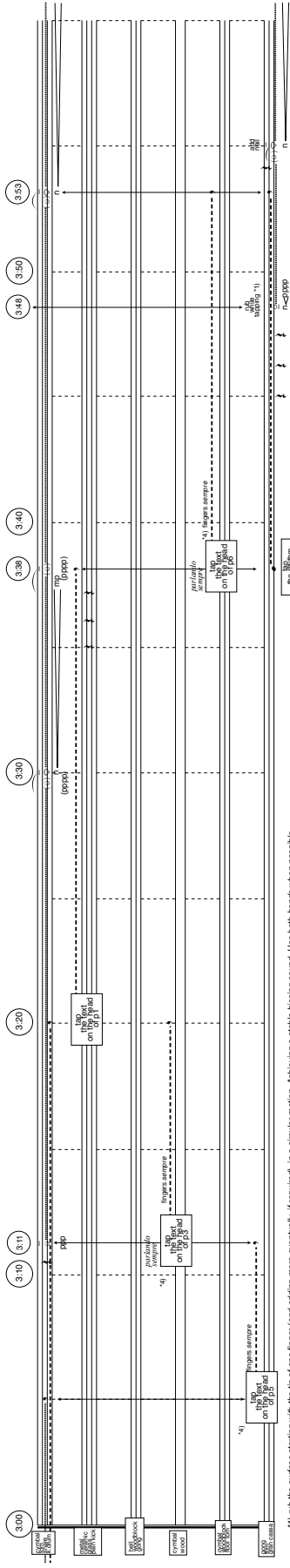
A slow exploration of all the register of the instrument through a descendant and continuous *glissando*.

Performance should last between ten and fifteen minutes.

Dynamics should be as stable as possible and change very gradually according to the nature of register.

This score could operate as a triggering device for the solutions and interpretations that the bassoonist may provide, i.e. the probable impossibilities of realization should provide the form of the piece and the shape to the content of it.

Performing the piece with the bassoonist hanging upside-down or with the instrument upside-down could be considered.

[illegible]

*3) rub the cymbal very fast and without producing a **striked attack**

*5) all text in crochets means spoken text

8:00 8:10 8:20 8:30 8:40 8:50 9:00 9:10 9:20 9:30 9:40 9:50 10:00 10:10 10:20 10:30 10:40 10:50

transduce | privilege

Program Notes

This piece is about migration of energies from one realm to another. The notion of transducer allows to transform a text material into its different outputs. Of course this processes are inherent with political power exercises

Performance of the piece

Before the performance of the piece, and before audience comes in, an announcement must be made: Only people with a non-US passport is allowed to enter. After the piece ends, all people should come in. The announcement should be made by the staff of the venue.

Performance Notes

Time is divided in pieces of 5 seconds. The score is written in two ways. When precise rhythmic patterns are required, quarter will be always equals 60 bpm. The other way is proportional to the context and placement of the sounds. When precise synchronization is required, it will be pointed with a vertical arrow. Signs of specific techniques on sound production are explained on score. In each case, Different lines serve to prolong the sound or gesture over time. The used text is provided on the score. The reading of it, should always begin in a different part and every percussionist should choose a different starting point. If the percussionist ends reading, he/she should repeat the process. Vibraphone is prepared. Big pieces of foil must be placed loose over the keys to achieve a white-noised colored sound material each time one key is hit. The ideal printing size for this score is 56.9 x 44 cm. (4 letter size or 2 tabloid size)

5. TRANSFER. A nonimmigrant student is permitted to transfer to a different school provided the transfer procedure is followed. To transfer schools, you should first notify the school you are attending of the intent to transfer, then obtain a Form I-20 A-B from the school you intend to attend. Transfer will be effected only if you return the Form I-20 A-B to the designated school official within 15 days of beginning attendance at the new school. The designated school official will then report the transfer to the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

6. EXTENSION OF STAY. If you cannot complete the educational program after having been in student status for longer than the anticipated length of the program plus a grace period in a single educational level, or for more than eight consecutive years, you must apply for extension of stay. An application for extension of stay on a Form I-538 should be filed with the Immigration and Naturalization Service district office having jurisdiction over your school at least 15 days but no more than 60 days before the expiration of your authorized stay.

transduce | privilege

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Abyección | memory_topographies

**Megaphone, Percussion, Cello and Live Electronics
for Pamplémousse Ensemble**

Omar Fraire - 2016

Program Notes

From October 2nd of 1968 up to now there have been several massacres in México. Each of these precise days a particular pop song was a number one hit in the US. Whether this entanglement of events can converge in a realm where a hit could signify a semiotically abject abyss, it is in the territory of historical time where its truly abjection is deployed with a contemptuous innocence.

abyección_MemoryTopographies

Performance Notes

Metronome marking = 120. Each space is a time unit. Events can occur at an exact synchronization point when they are crossed by the vertical lines. Events in the middle space can occur proportionally to the space where they are. Horizontal lines after note heads mean prolongation of the sound. They change its shape in order to clarify a transformation in timbre.

Live Electronics:

A Max/Msp process is triggered through midi foot controllers by each performer. The dotted line shows the duration of the event. The play and stop figures mean pressing the pedal for starting and ending the process, respectively.

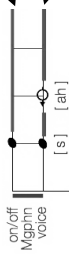
Amplification:

Minimum distortion amplification should be applied to percussion and cello in order to balance subtle and delayed dynamics and to blend timbre with megaphone.

Megaphone:

A device with handheld mic and siren is required. The volume should be always up to the top while the performer controls the dynamics by the proximity of her/his mouth to the mic.

Notation:

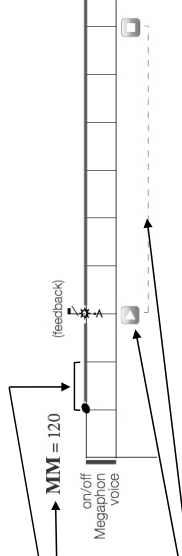


Device itself:

- * Feedback sound – approaching the mic to the horn.
- Turning on/off the handheld mic.

Voice/mouth (always through the megaphone):

- ◇ Kissing noise.
- ∞ Inhale through the mouth.
- ↵ Saliva sound. Slurp saliva continuously, achieving a frying sound.
- Ordinary spoken sound.
- [ah, k, t, s, sh] Sounds of letters pronounced in English.



Percussion:

Snare I – Upside-down always. Within E-Bow on the snares.

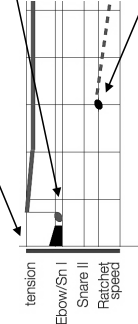
Snare II – *modo ordinaria*.

Ratchet – A two legs one is preferred. Should be attached to one snaredrum.

A Polyethylene sheet.

Drumsticks and Brushes.

Notation:



Snare I

* Scratch with the polyethylene sheet.

- Turning on the E-bow.

Snare II

○ Rubbing the head in circular motion in order to get a continuous white

noise sound. Always with brushes.

∞ Rubbing the head with tremolo. Always with brushes.

■ Rim Shot with drumsticks.

■ Granular sound. Press the brush over the head and squeeze it

with fingers. Twist the brush for achieving the sound with one hand.

↓ Growling. In a vertical position, the tip of the stick is placed against the head. Grip the stick

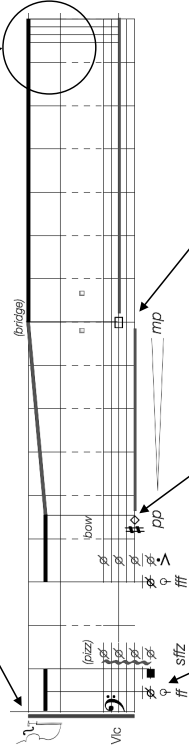
from the top and slowly move your fingers with friction toward the tip.

The E-Bow should be placed over the snares, taking at least 4 of them in its middle groove. It should be adjusted so you can get higher sounds when the tension is high and unstable rumbling when snares are loose.

The upper line means very fast spin of the ratchet. The lower line the slower the motion, 60 bpm ca.

Violoncello

Notation:
Upper staff is used to rotate the right hand bow position. The lower line means extreme *sul tasto*, right where the body of the instrument ends. The upper line is right on the bridge. The line indicates continuous movement from one position to another.



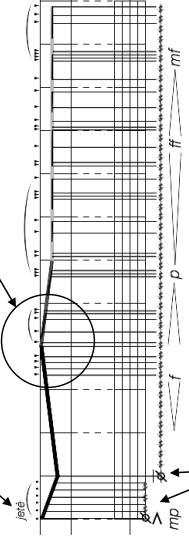
Each stem means a change in the bow direction. Unless otherwise indicated.

Left hand harmonic pressure. Its placement does not necessarily correspond to a harmonic sound.

Bartók pizzicato.

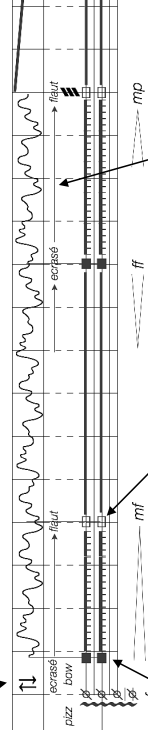
White noise sound on the bridge.

Bouncing the bow, producing sounds as short as possible, with one bow stroke.



Damp the string with left hand. No harmonic or pitched sound production. Normal pressure on bow, non *flautato*.

Brushing motion of the bow



Ecrasé. Overpressure. No pitched sound distinguishable.

Flautato. Soft pressure of the bow.

Horizontal arrows mean gradual transformation from one state to another

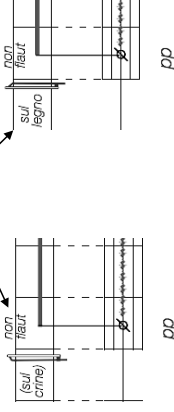
Two Bows Technique:

A second bow is placed over the fingerboard. Between I and III string. The left hand holds it firmly against the fingerboard.

The tip of the bow should be stuck at the bridge.

The right hand bow plays on the left bow, either on the hair or on the wood stick. The placement and/or movement of the right hand bow is indicated with a line on the upper staff.

A little over normal pressure is required to achieve a sound between low frequency and regular beating should be produced. In the case of bowing *sul legno*. For *sul crine* case, normal bow pressure is required.



abyección | Memory_topographies

[illegible]

The musical score for "The Great Wall" by John Adams is presented on a grid background. It includes parts for vocalists (Vc), string ensembles (Sr I, Sr II), and a piano (p). The score is divided into measures, with dynamic markings such as *pp*, *mp*, *ff*, and *f* indicating the volume. Performance instructions like "on/off Mgrn voice" and "paz" are included. The score is written in a complex, multi-measure format, with various musical notations and symbols used throughout.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Symphony No. 9

6
560

cn/off Magnin voice

[k] [sh] [ktk] [sh] [mp] < mf > pp

Tns Eb/Sn II Sn II Rt sp

Vlc pizz flour ecrasé p

f mp

(617)

an/off Magnin voice

[kk][k] [lk] [kk]

p pp

Tns Eb/Sn II Sn II Rt sp

Vlc pizz f

(641)

cn/off Magnin voice

[ah] mf

Tns Eb/Sn II Sn II Rt sp

Vlc regno flour ord ecrasé sul I

mf p

pp f mf ff

ff

721

on/off
voice

ins
Ed/Srl
Srl II
Ed
Srl

mf

non
result
(srl
chng)

pp

[illegible]

on/off
Mgphn
voice

trns

Ep/Snl
Sn II
Rt
Sp

Vlc

on/off
Mgphn
voice

trns

Ep/Snl
Sn II
Rt
Sp

Vlc

**Articulate
power
oegf
memorial_Chapel
wesleyan_University
4.04.17.
2100hrs.**

Energy | Articulation
ft. Dush

Una Raíz Para Dos Cielos

Solidarity, we will win
From now on
We will take, Your Example
We will sing with a voice
The Union Effort
Forming a Great Nation
Solidarity, we will be
From The Child to the Elderly
In You We Believe, And We Will Be
Your Most Worthy Messenger
In Bad Or Very Good Times
We are eagles in flight

Premonition | manifesto
ft. Andrew Colwell + Tomek Arnold

Very Special Thanks

Lucero Alonso Hallie Blejewski Warren Enström Matt Wellins Andrew Colwell Tomek Arnold

Omar Fraire presents a concert performing electroacoustic handmade instruments by him and pieces for video, throat singer and percussion. In this occasion he realizes a tension between the visible and invisible, the audible and the visual and between power exercises, given these from electrical energy or from interaction of human influences.

Premonition | manifesto

